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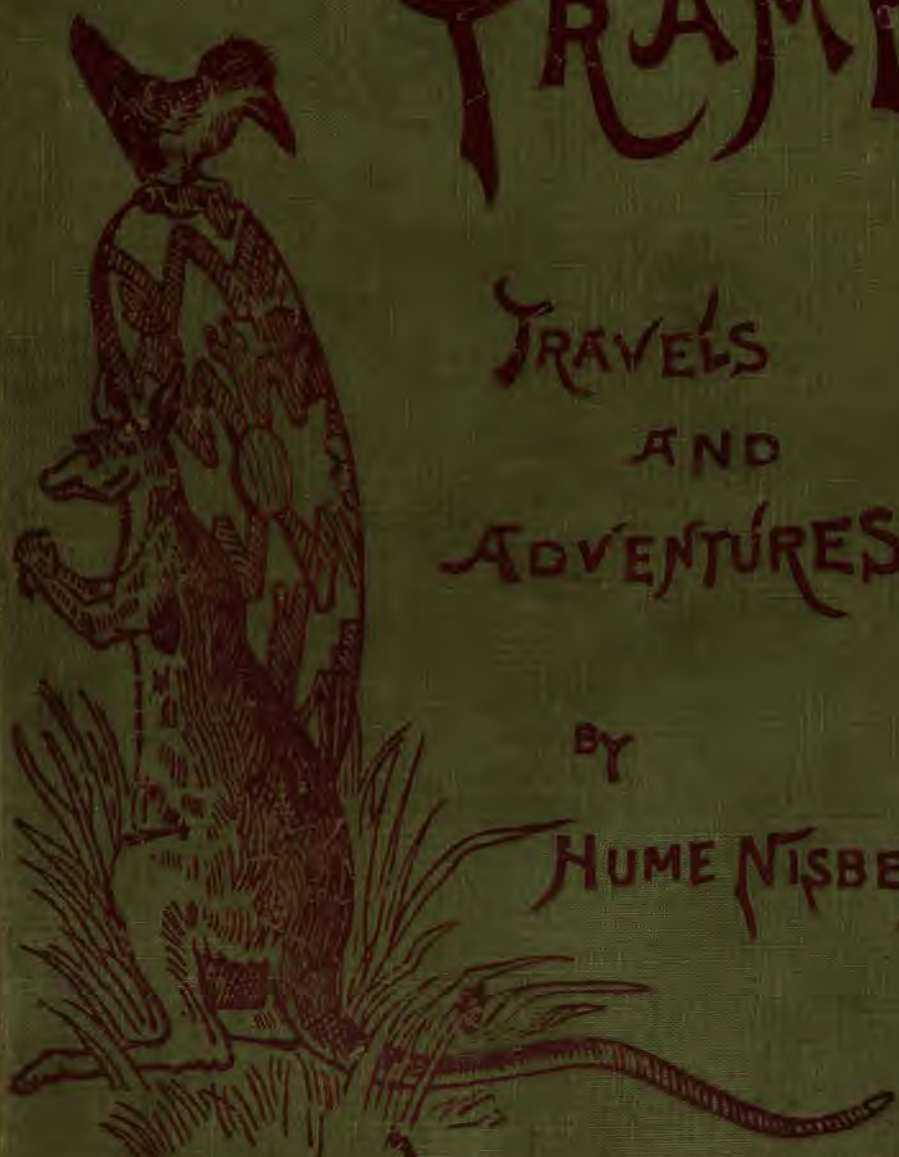
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COLONIAL TRAMP

TRAVELS AND ADVENTURES

BY

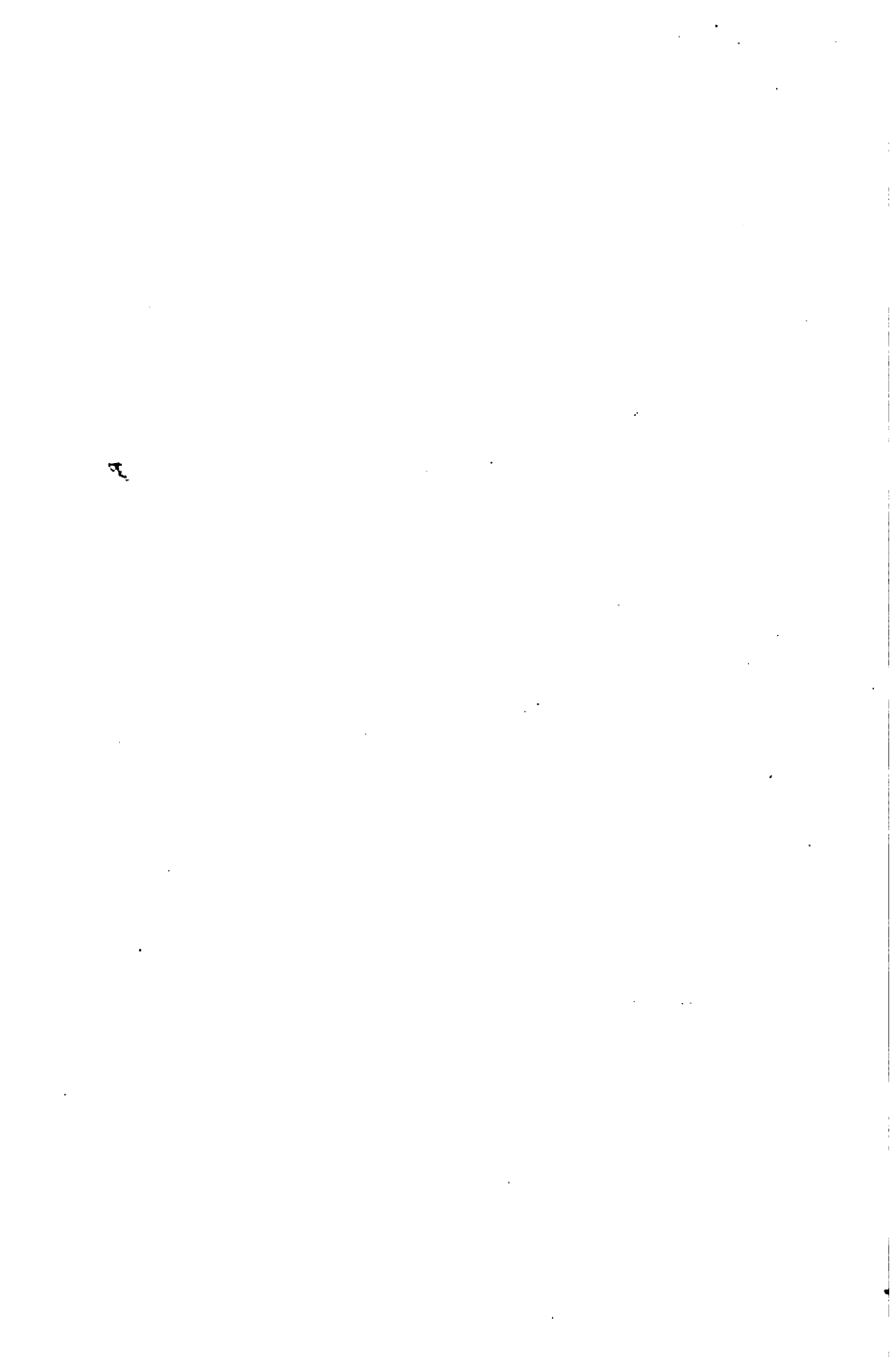
HUME NISBET



1. Australia - Descr. and trav.,
1850 - 1900

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trav.

BHI
Nisbet







A COLONIAL TRAMP

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A COLONIAL TRAMP

Travels and Adventures in Australia and New Guinea

BY

HUME NISBET

AUTHOR OF "THE RAIN FOREST OF THE AUSTRALIAN TROPICS,"
"THE RAIN FOREST OF THE AUSTRALIAN TROPICS,"



An Ideal Pocket Companion

NEW EDITION

LONDON

WARD & DOWNNEY, LIMITED

12 YORK BUILDINGS, ADELPHI W.C.

1896

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ONIAL TRAMP

es in Australia and New Guinea

BY

E NISBET

THE HIBISCUS BLOSSOM 'RIGHT BELLS'
'OF THE MONTHS' ETC.



A COLONIAL TRAMP

Travels and Adventures in Australia and New Guinea

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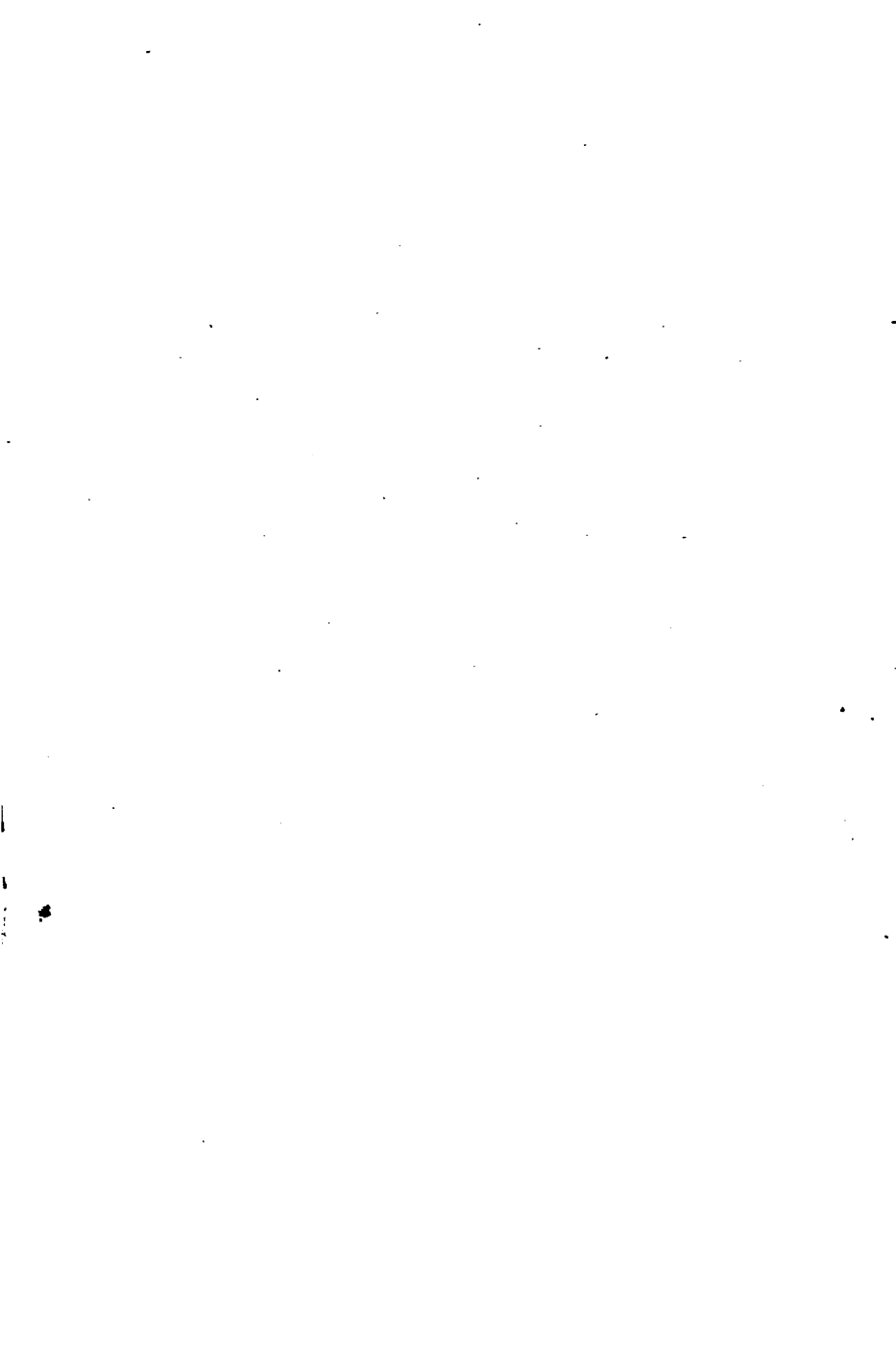
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TO
THE AGENTS-GENERAL OF THE DIFFERENT
AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES
AND ALL THE NUMEROUS COLONIAL FRIENDS
WHO HAVE KINDLY ASSISTED ME
WITH THIS BOOK OF TRAVELS
I NOW BEG TO DEDICATE IT WITH THANKS
AND REGARDS



PREFACE

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

FIVE years have nearly passed since I wrote 'A Colonial Tramp,' and before bringing out the present edition I paid a third visit to the Antipodes to see if any important changes had taken place during that interval. I found nothing to make me alter my former text.

These five years have been comparatively stagnant years, as far as progress is concerned, for the Colonies. The fever of the Land Boom filled out the earlier portion of the time, when men could think about little else than buying or selling land at fabulous prices. The bursting of this bubble, with its disastrous results, have weighed upon the Colonies very heavily since. Yet the glooms of those latter times are beginning to disperse, and the sun of prosperity shows visible signs of appearing through the clouds.

In the cities and suburbs there are, of course, many new streets and additional rows of houses built since my book was written; but as I have not enumerated the streets in its pages, it answers the same purpose now as it did then—*i.e.* to describe faithfully the people and the country that they inhabit, with some of their customs and institutions. I have written cheerfully about these because the people were hopeful and cheerful on my former visit; and as I know well the immense vitality of the nation and the vast resources of the country, this book, which describes their former condition, anticipates only the state they must

again be in before many months have elapsed—*i.e.* a people picking up Hope, Energy, and Prosperity.

At the present time they may be, like Job was after his arch-enemy left him, stripped almost bare and much discouraged, yet unconquered, and, let us hope, true to the traditions and faiths of their pioneer fathers, men who came to a land uncultivated and under a thousand times worse conditions than it ever can be again. These ancestors made it what it is. It does not require a prophet to see that its future will be as Job's was, eclipsing by a hundredfold its past prosperity.

Therefore I can only leave my former impressions as they are and quote this country's national motto as my own desire and firm faith in their federated future—'*Advance Australia!*'

LONDON, 1896.

PREFACE

TO

THE FIRST EDITION.

To my numerous colonial friends I wish to dedicate the following descriptions and experiences, because without their kindly assistance, advice, and directions, I could not have got along as I did, in the short time at my disposal, during my last tour through their land. Throughout the entire breadth and length of the great continent, and the two opposite islands, New Guinea and Tasmania, friends cropped up as thickly as the tares did in the scriptural devil-sown field (pardon the simile, but I could not, at the moment, think about anything of more phenomenal growth with the same sturdy qualities). But to continue; friends sprang up at every turn, all eager, and, what was more to the purpose, mostly all able, to help me as I sped along. I took their advice when I could do so, and tried to benefit by their experience; and as my former stay in the country enabled me to discriminate what was the most useful to my purpose, I now offer to them all the results, trusting that they may be fairly satisfied with my present efforts to please them.

It seems almost an invidious thing to particularise anyone, and I hope that those whose names I may forget to mention in this preface will discover throughout the pages that I have not forgotten to take full advantage of all that they so generously bestowed upon me in the shape of information; I hope also, that, as they pardon my bad memory for names, they will not be so modest as to abstain from taking the credit to themselves when their own

particular bit comes in. I want them to say, 'I put him up to that gag,' or 'I sent him to that spot'; and so we will all be honest, and mutually well pleased each with the other—they in their free gifts, and I in the using of them. Still, I think it to be my duty to mention with gratitude the names that are most strongly impressed upon the tablets of my memory, while acknowledging their many acts of disinterested kindness. In Victoria, Mr. Charles Gardner and Professor Morris, Messrs. Robert Waller of the *Australasian*, and Robert Russell the first surveyor of Melbourne, John Lang Currie of Lara, and James Dawson of Camperdown, the black-fellow's friend, besides many members of the Melbourne Press. In New South Wales, Mr. James Burns, of Burns, Philp & Co., and Brother Vosper, photographer, of Sydney. In Queensland, Messrs. Fergusson booksellers, and the general members of the Johnsonian Club, Brisbane, with Vivian Bowden, Mr. Millman, and the other kindly friends at Thursday Island. In New Guinea, His Excellency the Hon. John Douglas, and Andrew Goldie, naturalist; the gentle Father Vergus of Yule Island, and Mr. Kessick of Teste Island, with the other traders scattered about; not forgetting the Rev. Samuel MacFarlane and James Chalmers, whom I met in London after my return. In Tasmania, Mr. Justin Brown and Mr. Morton of Hobart, and Mr. Birchall, of Walsh Brothers & Birchall, of Launceston; also Miss Mitchell, who so generously lent me her sketches, and Colonel Aitkinson of the *Launceston Examiner*, who presented me with so many of his most exquisite photographic pictures of this beautiful island. To one and all I now offer my best thanks, warmest regards, and never-to-be-forgotten feelings of brotherhood and friendship.

LONDON: HOGARTH CLUB,
36 DOVER STREET, PICCADILLY, W.
1890.

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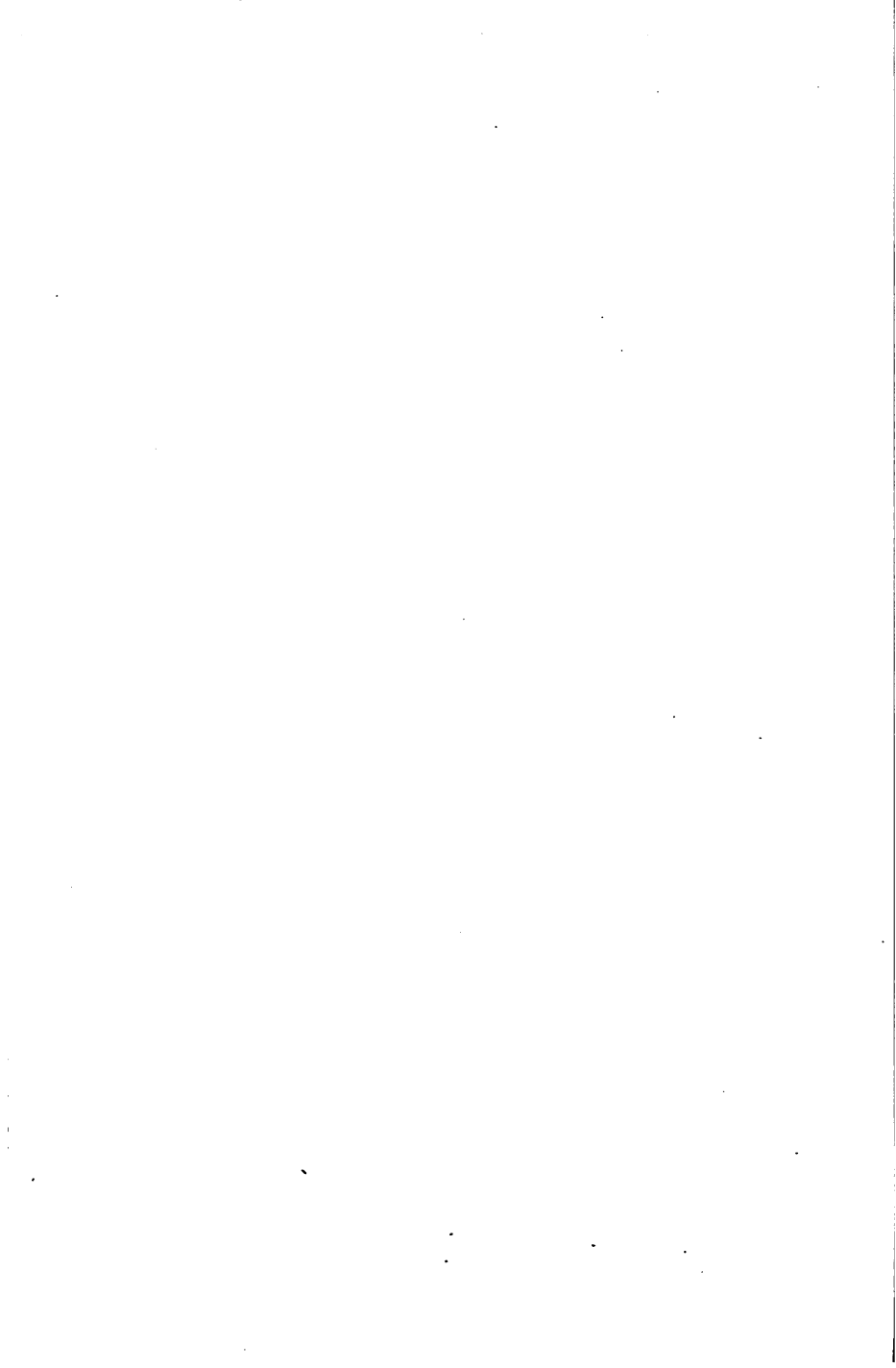
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A COLONIAL TRAMP

INTRODUCTION

THE year 1886 opened up about as inauspiciously as it possibly could open, both as regards the weather and as regards my own hopes and prospects.

Ice and snow alternated with fogs and gloom, which, beginning in November, progressed from bad to worse, until life became a misery to those who had to endure the hardships of the snow or slush-lined streets.

Personally, it was a constant series of dampening disappointments. I had made a set of plans, as early as October, to accomplish Australasia in a given time, and four months had been wasted in re-arranging, altering, re-planning new routes, trying to curtail time, and waiting, in an oscillating state between faint hope and chill despair, until at last I had almost become passive and careless as to the result of my four months of planning and alteration—the enthusiasm with which I first plunged into the work being nearly frozen to death.

I knew my ground well from former experience, also the time which it would take me to go over it, and do the work conscientiously which I had to do; therefore, to be cut down from five years to two years, and afterwards to have to re-arrange my plans so as to go over land and water to the extent of 35,000 miles, sketching and writing, in one year; and, finally, either to give up all hopes of doing it, or promise to crush five years of conscientious work into a little more than six months—all this, with a

wretched winter aiding the other discomforts, made me, as the time dragged on, more and more inclined to shy from it altogether, and fix my attention on something else.

A tramp through Poland, at present so little known, where my pen and pencil would find work enough to satisfy even my intense craving for exertion; a journey from London through Russia, Siberia, Afghanistan, and India, has ever loomed up, now and again, as a job gigantic enough to fill out time: or a trip through China and Japan, to make quaint drawings of the Celestial homesteads—to grasp the world, if I could, with my note-book, and bind it up in cloth-and-gold.

These and other plans and projects hovered up, with the fascinating allurements of smoke-visions, to be looked at and laid aside, in a half-created way, after that broad, first rub-in which painters love to lay aside, and look at occasionally, until circumstances force the taking up and putting into definite and saleable form; while I waited on the decision which was to send me off once more to my old haunts, or leave me projecting fresh ideas. At length the order came, as it generally does in these lingering cases, to pack up and quit England by the first P. and O. steamship; a few days to make all preparations, and say good-bye to those I was leaving behind.

No one likes promptitude more than I do; but to be hurried up, at the end of four months of hot and cold uncertainty, with only three days to arrange matters for twelve months of absence, and that awful six months of mental anxiety and bodily fatigue in front, did not serve to rekindle the enthusiasm with which I had first regarded the task. Still, it was better than an abandonment of my idea; for I am of that dogged disposition that, once a project takes life, until it is accomplished in some way or another it will not be dismissed, but returns again and again, like an importunate beggar, so that I am forced to yield to it before I can regain peace.

Knowing this very unhappy obstinacy of mine, I had partly prepared for going, feeling assured in my own mind that, if not successful with the present firm who were negotiating, some other firm would have to send me to the

hemisphere of the Southern Cross, willy nilly, else I would never find rest in this portion of the globe; for I had sent my wife and family to the country during the first ice of November, and had most of my belongings and boxes packed, and ready for storing.

To read over my contract-papers and sign them, interview the chief of the firm, purchase the articles wanted on the voyage (I did not buy all the things marked as strictly indispensable on the voyage, for I had been long sea-voyages before, and one learns to do without, and trust to Providence for a great deal, after having crossed the Line once or twice), store my goods to be left behind, secure our berths, and listen to a few final instructions from headquarters; and then I turned my face towards that little country village on the banks of Tweed which held all that I cared for in this world, beyond the Work, which is always with me, go where I may.

What a blessed thing an object is, no matter whether it succeeds or fails! Already, in this snowdrift which was whirling about the carriages, and blocking up the fading light, as we rushed towards Scotland, my mind was travelling and perspiring under tropical suns, through bush-lands, where the charred gum-stump stood out blackly against dead, white branches and sharding trunks, while from the dried-up ground uprose whirlwind clouds of powdered grass, dun-tinted against the shivering, softly azure space. I was coming to say Farewell with the feeling upon me of returning from a hard task successfully accomplished.

As this is not the record of sentiment, but the descriptive account of a year of travel, with comparative notes of a country, seen again after a space of fourteen years, where months do as much reform as years can afford to work in England, I shall not intrude my private feelings, beyond a few words relative to that parting.

My wife, like most people who have not been abroad, had very vague notions of the probable experiences in store for me: some dangers she imagined where no such dangers could exist, while, by a happy ignorance, the real points of insecurity never occurred to her.

However, on one point she showed a knowledge of

locality not quite satisfactory to me. It appears that some kind friends had lent to her papers with full accounts of recent atrocities in New Guinea, during the four months of my probation, and on that point she was very positive.

‘Remember, you must not go to New Guinea.’

I replied somewhat Jesuitically, I am afraid, and drew her attention from that undesirable topic of conversation, without committing myself in any way.

We had to sail on January 28 ; so, as most of my arrangements were completed, I resolved to take the night train up on the 27th, thereby giving myself as much time at home as I could take, and as little time to inhale the sulphur and fogs of London streets.

A most miserable night to travel through, that night of the 27th—wild hurricanes of driving snow, piling up on the windows and hedges, weighing down the telegraph-wires which were not already broken with the weight of former snowstorms, and with a wind that whistled through keyholes and howled down chimneys as we sat together by the fire, in the bedroom where our children slept, waiting upon the coming of the machine which had been ordered to bear me to the station.

9.30 P.M., and the moment had arrived for us to part. The snorting of the struggling horses, as they fought with the heavy roadways and blinding drift, told us it had come, for the clogged wheels made no noise. Snatching up my little handbag and rugs, I bent over the bed to kiss the little sleepers, before her who was to have the weary charge—bending over the little cot which held my curly-headed Bell, I took my *last kiss* of the rosy lips ; and thus, together, my wife and I ran downstairs.

A wild, buffeting blast as we flung open the outer door, to see the coach, an ungainly, black object, in the midst of that dull grey waste, heaving about as the two horses are urged towards the bar of yellow light which the dark shadows of our figures break up ; while at the same moment a vivid flash of lightning stabs swiftly through those dense snow curtains, followed by an ominous peal of thunder ; and then the storm goes on as before, with the great soft flakes crowding down faster than ever.

'Don't go at all,' cried my wife, who is Border-bred, and embrued with superstition. 'It is an omen of evil, and there will be an accident.'

'Rather an omen that I will make a noise in the world, and shine,' I replied, bidding her farewell, and jumping into the conveyance.

A last glance backwards, as that loved figure stands out darkly in the doorway, with the mellow lamplight behind her, and then we have rounded the corner, and my long journey has begun.

CHAPTER I

FROM LONDON TO PANTELLARIA

Tilbury Docks—The English Channel—Bay of Biscay—Old Recollections—Spanish Coast—Cape Finisterre—English, Colonials, and Israelites—Cape St. Vincent—Lagos Bay—Sunset at Sea—Coast of Tunis—Canê and Zembra Islands—Pantellaria.

SAILORS are not nearly so superstitious now as they were in olden days. I had a feeling that we would not start upon our journey before Friday, and so it came to pass. All Thursday we hung about the docks at Tilbury with the friends who had come to see us off, waiting, and trying to keep up the same air of interest which we were attempting to simulate, but with an utter sense of boredom over us all.

Why people will linger on wharves and railway-platforms to see the last of their friends I cannot say, and I do not suppose they could either; an hour more or less can make no difference when good-bye has to be said. It comes much better when uttered abruptly, for the prolonging of it has the effect which the stretching out of all climaxes have—to weaken it, and weary both actors and audience. Power, tragedy, and strength are always swift and sudden in their action; and pathos descends inevitably to bathos when it is long-drawn-out.

It was very kind of our friends to come; although, as far as I was concerned, they were mere temporary acquaintances,

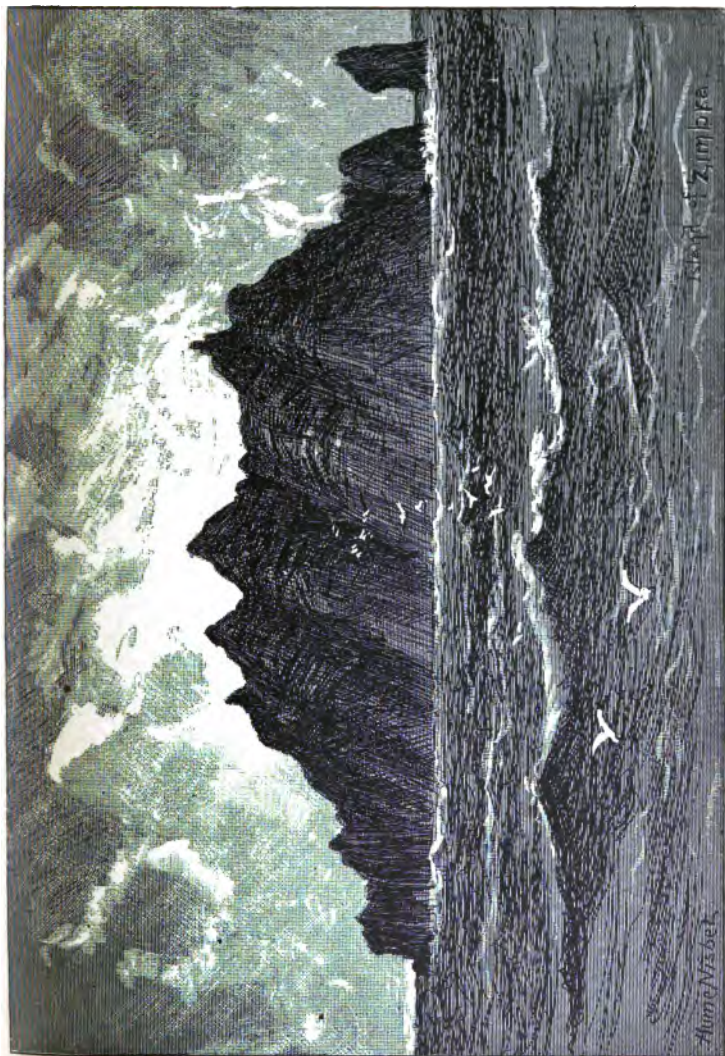
to whom it did not matter greatly whether we ever saw one another again or not ; and after we had looked over the splendid P. and O. steamship 'Parramatta,' and partaken of a little lunch and a couple of cigars, we fell back upon our pipes, wishing that this parting ceremony were past, and that either they or the vessel would get away, so that we might settle down to our new life, and have a moment to our own reflections.

At length the gangway planks were removed from the wharf and the last of the good-bye-bidders warned fairly ashore, my old friend being the very last to leave the deck—a most energetic septuagenarian, who put us all to the blush with his daring activity, and who has lived long enough to be fixed in his conviction that there is nothing worthy of respect under the sun except success ; so I must succeed if he is to be my friend—and we can go below, and see to the placing of our luggage.

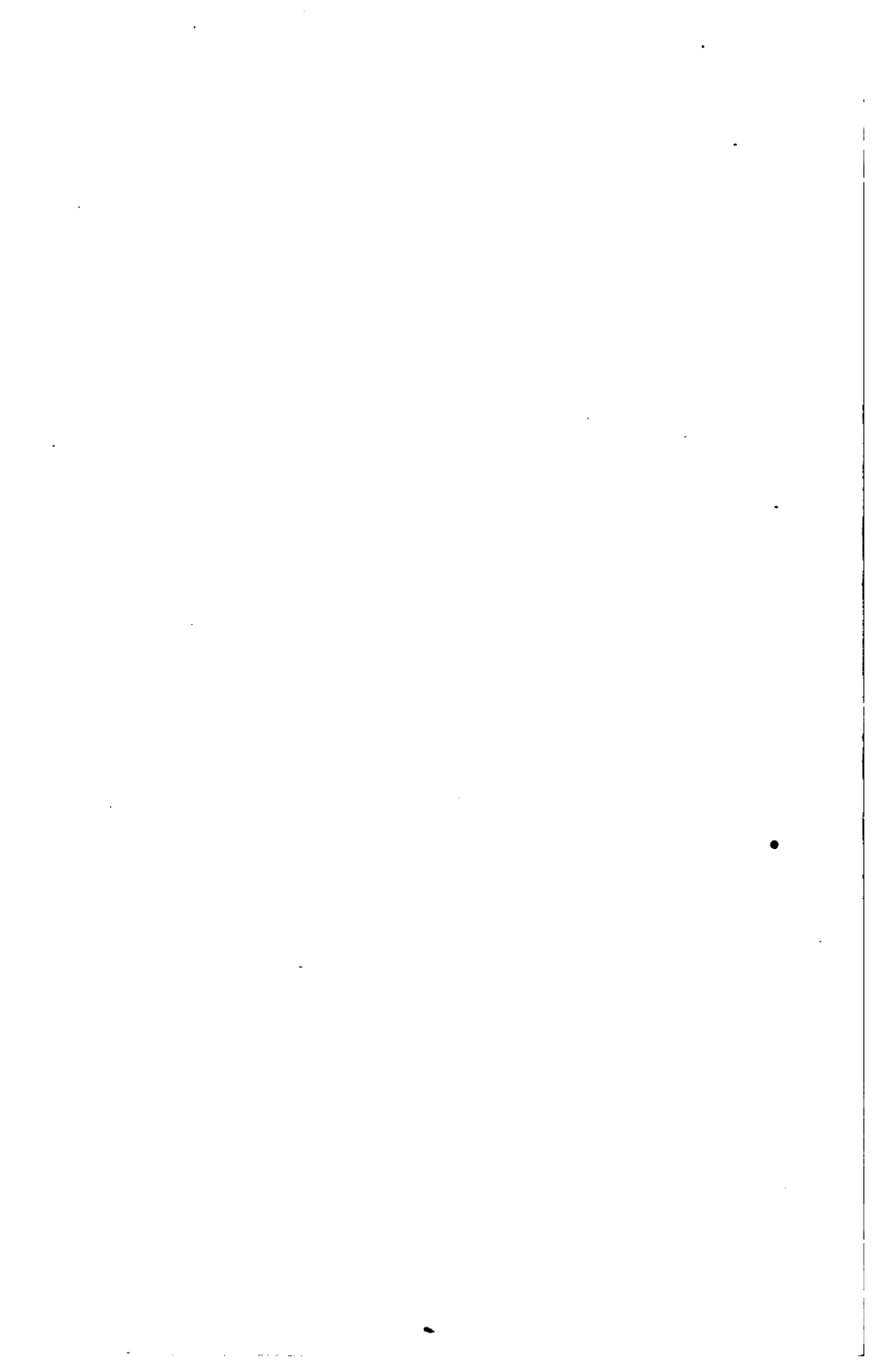
Down the Thames, with its crowded boat-life, too often described to be told again here ; past Gravesend, Sheerness, and Shoeburyness ; Dungeness, Hastings, and Beachy Head. Near the latter place a friend of mine watched the combat between the 'Alabama' and the 'Kearsage,' June 19, 1864 ; he was on board the yacht which picked up Captain Semmes after the sinking of his vessel, and speaks with enthusiasm about the gallant but unlucky Confederate.

A bustling hour at Portsmouth : then Southampton, the Isle of Wight, Dartmouth, Eddystone Lighthouse—which starts out trimly on that cold, grey sea, with the white sails of countless craft homeward or outward bound—and we have left the chalk cliffs of England in our rear—not much to look at after our red-sandstone walls of Scotland, I think : although, perhaps, the sensation slowly creeping over me has something to do with this prejudice on my part—that sensation so well known in the past, for which the rising waves are accountable, with that awful Bay of Biscay in the near front.

Weather getting rougher every hour. Yet, thanks to the splendid ship, we can hardly gauge the full severity of the storm which we are steaming swiftly into. The Captain in his after-report marked it 'very heavy,' and we hear after-



ZEMBRA ISLAND



wards of several shipwrecks which occurred at this time in the Bay. I have the deck pretty nearly to myself, but when I try to take notes, my paper is washed away; yet the effects are too magnificent to pay attention to a few discomforts of that sort, while I feel better above, in the biting blast, than below, in the stuffy cabin.

The Bay of Biscay, with the tempest at its wildest, and the 'Parramatta' doggedly plodding her way through it all.

Sea-voyages now are stripped of a vast deal of the romance and discomforts of old 'clipper' days. We go through a tempest now, which would then have knocked things to pieces, with hardly a roll: there is no waiting on winds or lying becalmed at the Line for weeks, as I have lain; as there are none of those bird-like sensations when the ship flew slantways before a fifteen-knot-an-hour breeze. All those experiences and uncertainties are over in our steam days; we slip out of a stationary hotel ashore, to a floating hotel, with the same crowd about us, and the day of our arrival at each port as definitely fixed as the hours of tiffin and dinner are.

No chance of being driven, as I have been, from the coast of Africa to nearly within sight of America, on the wings of a steady gale. We can go round the Horn now without the slightest risk of seeing the icebergs of the South pole, although I have gone over those mighty waves until the vessel was in danger of being submerged with the weight of the salt-water ice-sheets which were each minute being laid on, layer above layer, as the wash curled about our cordage and poured along our decks. Those horrors are all overcome by the hand of science, and we can watch the tempest, impotently writhing around us, from the well-appointed decks of to-day, as securely, and with nearly the same comfort, as we might from a sheltered sea-coast.

The Bay of Biscay is never a pleasant portion of the world to cross, even at its best. I have gone over it several times, and only once in calm weather; and then we nearly ran into the water-logged hulk of a wreck called 'The Stormy Petrel.' We sighted it just at sunrise—a scarlet and purple sunrise—as it lay helpless on those glassy rollers, like

an abandoned, death-dealing corpse ; an hour earlier, and it might have made a wreck of us, for it was directly in our track. These wood-laden craft never sink, but drift about like so many rocks, with the constant danger of ships sailing into them in the dark, until someone takes the trouble to blow them up with dynamite.

On this last day of January the Bay is much rougher than we can estimate from our safe and steady positions ; cold, yet I fancy not so keen as it blew yesterday in the Channel. It feels moister and more salty, the water very blue, with foam undertones of an antwerpy and emerald mixed tint, the light side of the waves catching purple lights from the scurrying, dove-coloured clouds overhead, with under or shaded sides bottle-blue to slate colour. Once we catch a glimpse of an ordinary-sized steamer fighting against the blast, and by this we can partly measure its strength with the magnitude of the waves. I am too sea-sick to venture below, so stay on deck and watch.

Feb. 1st.—We passed Cape Finisterre about nine o'clock on this our second morning out. The Cape showed out for a few moments from the dense veil of mist—only long enough to let me make a pencil-sketch. Sea greyer and more slaty in tone, sky hazy and grey, with heavy showers ; everything very moist, yet withal a decided feeling of comfort. We can now go on deck without overcoats and winter-gloves, and the male passengers are beginning to appear, while one daring lady joins us at breakfast. My companion thinks he would like to try a walk with me on deck, although it is a day of drenching showers, with a gleam of yellow amongst the grey haze where the sun should be at setting, and waves growing less.

Feb. 2nd.—Cape Espichel shows up about seven o'clock this morning. Headland half-veiled in mist, with rainbow over to the right, and water sap-green in the near depths, terre-verte in middle distance, and passing through gradations of colour to blue-grey in the far-off distance : a lovely morning, with a balmy south-west-breeze, and steamer passing steadily over the little-crested waves. The passengers are all coming out of their cabins, and beginning to get friendly with one another. They seem a free lot, with a

few exceptions : Colonials returning home, and one or two lively Jews and Jewesses going out to visit colonial friends, with fewer specimens of the John Bull type than are usually to be found in these floating P. and O. or Orient Hotels.

The Colonial is free in his manners, and accessible, as a rule, both when travelling and at home ; the Jew is mostly social and open in his intercourse, being cosmopolitan. But John Bull is naturally assertive, suspicious, and conservative at home or abroad, more particularly when travelling abroad, his polish being a veneer which will not stand much damp or discomfort.

Of course, there are exceptions, always and everywhere ; which only goes to prove the rule, as these exceptions are, without fail, men and women who have travelled so much about the world that they have absorbed, unconsciously, the best of other national qualities, until they have lost their own characteristics.

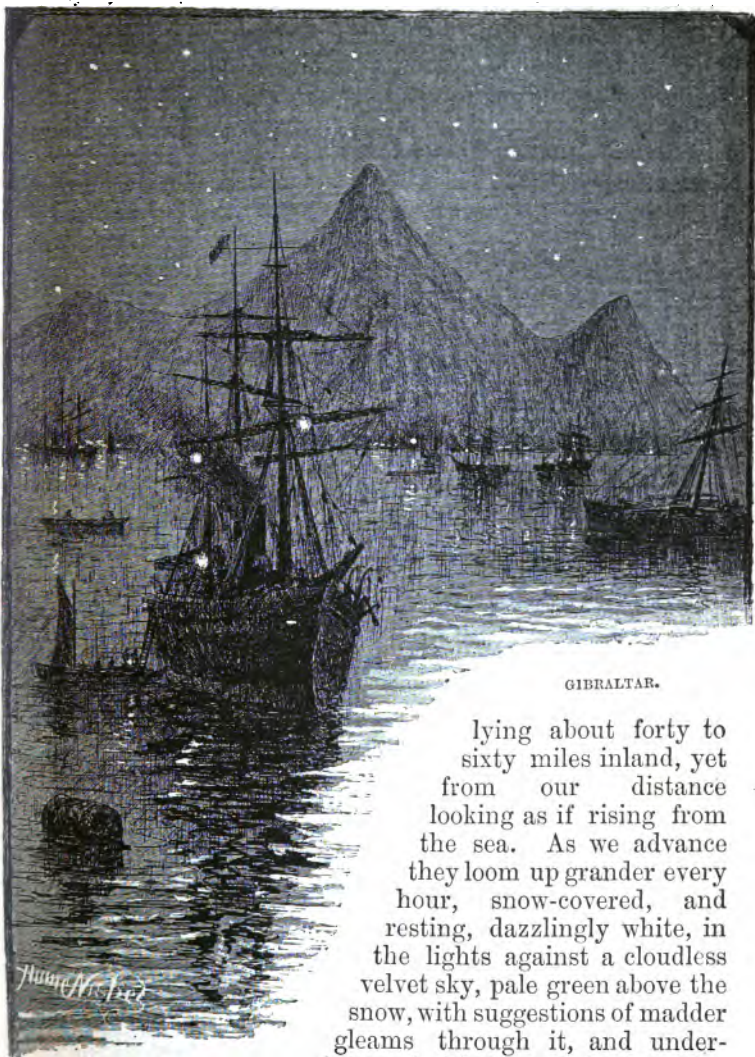
I like to travel with Australians and Jews, and I think we can appreciate one another, as I admire them both with a vast admiration—the Australian for his pluck and enterprise, and the Israelite for the antiquity of his name and unsullied descent ; of which, by the way, he never boasts, even although in the company of some mushroom-aristocrat of some ten or twenty befogged generations, who is looking unutterable things, in the way of stand-offishness, at the Oriental wearer of a pedigree reaching back through a crystal vista of many centuries. Therefore, if I have been taught to venerate genealogies and respect blood, and can bend my back to a lord of yesterday's creation, how much the more ought I to salaam to these pure-blooded sons and daughters of kings and princes, and be grateful for the condescension of any of this great race, honoured and ennobled by the Maker of earth, than of one of the obscure races which He taught them, through their leaders and prophets, in the first instance, very properly to despise.

We are all on deck, getting acquainted, and enjoying the balm of this rapidly-developing summer, as we watch the sky clearing and the light playing over the ocean's surface, and bringing out portions of the Spanish coast which we are passing so swiftly. Of Cape St. Vincent I get some

finely-lighted sketches as we come up to it, and leave it behind, Lagos Bay and Cape de St. Maria in the distance, before we steam out of sight of land, with a most gorgeous sunset on the western side, golden with violet haze above an intensely blue ocean; next, a twilight very sombre and fine, with a large, white star lying near to a dark purple bank of clouds, low in tone, and awe-inspiring, as the light slowly faded out, and the night came, luminous and calm, with stars flashing above like bright lamps, and the phosphorescent sparkles blending with and lighting up the green foam-furrows which the swiftly-rushing hull throws up on either side—a night to lie on deck, watching, while the mind languidly drifts along, over years of bustle and care, to hours of rest.

Feb. 3rd.—Got through the gut of Gibraltar at four o'clock on this the fourth morning of our voyage. A dark, starry morning—too dark to make out more than a very faint outline of the Rock and the African coast. Through the night-glass I could make out form enough, with the lights from Tangier showing dimly behind the more luminous lighthouse lamps, to make a rough sketch of the general effect, with the position of the lights and reflections. I regretted much that we did not see this historical and still-disputed possession by day. I had seen so many pictures of it, that I seemed to know it thoroughly. But it has been my lot always to pass it by night—sometimes moon-lighted, sometimes, like the present time, star-mantled. But yet, what stars they are, like coloured lanterns hung up on high: two above the mast are red and yellow, with the dim lights from the officers' quarters like nearer orbs, and other, stronger lights, from ships and beacons, red, yellow, and green. These star-like jets of gleaming in front of that looming Indian-ink-like waste, against the mellow depth of the upper space, where the blazing worlds are rolling, with the sea flowing rapidly but silently through that narrow strait, and filled with phosphorescence, and the ship gliding, ghost-like, through it all, fill me (the only passenger left on deck) with a thrilling sense of immensity, as if I were treading my way through a world of stars.

By day we had sighted the Sierra Nevada mountains,



GIBRALTAR.

lying about forty to sixty miles inland, yet from our distance looking as if rising from the sea. As we advance they loom up grander every hour, snow-covered, and resting, dazzlingly white, in the lights against a cloudless velvet sky, pale green above the snow, with suggestions of madder gleams through it, and undertones of violet-grey where the indentations and gorges throw the snow-heaps into shadow.

As the eye wandered to the sea-line, strongly demarked, the local colouring is that of sterile sand and rocks rose-purple, ruddy and ochrey with green-grey and blue-grey intersections, very faint and filmy—a lovely scene to look upon, with outlines definite but tender, like a gauze-curtained picture rising from a sparkling and amethyst sea.

Feb. 4th.—Out of sight of land, a good fair wind, with a peculiar but glorious sunset, of which I got a sketch. It appeared more like the mirage of a view ashore on a magnified scale, done in gold and purple, than ordinary clouds. A warm, mellow-tinted sun, with an open space below it, along which a vessel with sails set was passing. On either side of the golden space, russet clouds stood upright like trees, with a broken-up mass above. This is a portion of the globe where sunsets are to be seen to perfection; they are as vivid as, but remain longer, and with slower gradations, than at the Equator. To-night there is a soft, yet powerful lustre, spreading from the sun over the warm grey of the clouds—a lustre slowly changing from old-gold to orange, as the sun dips below the sea-line; large and glowing masses hang above, with a deep blue, heaving sea, with not much reflection from the sun and none from the clouds. The passengers are now quite friendly with one another and confidential. The smoking-room is a great institution—quite a luxurious den, with marbled and gold ornamented walls, and plush-covered seats, placed near the fore-part of the ship. (When I returned from my journey we met this steamship at Suez, and visited her. They had made alterations, removing the smoking-room to the poop, and curtailing its dimensions. I felt as if the ship had lost something of much importance, besides its genial captain). The male portion of the passengers nearly all smoke, and those who do not are glad to come in and listen to the stories and jokes retailed here. Two, however, who frequent the place, sit very silent when the jests become broad—one, a genial old gentleman, who has travelled often in these waters, and who leaves us at Malta; and another, who seldom speaks, even at the best, but seems to carry an unacted tragedy upon his melancholy features and within his purely blue eyes. I refer to young Bainbridge, who met his death so tragically, a few months afterwards, at the destruction of the Pink Terraces, New Zealand.

Sunrise, and we are coming upon it and the Island of Galita the next morning, nearly in front of the site where Dido built her Carthage. As I look, I think upon the vivid descriptions given of these parts, and the people who there struggled their day out, by Gustave Flaubert in his 'Salamambo,' and seem to see in this sunrise and lemon-tinted sky, with that russet-purple island, once more the fleet of Carthaginian galleys filling up the blank space of cloud-land and tossing waters. Sea-birds are on the wing over the bold, slanting rocks between us and the coast of Africa; a warm glow spreads over the sky, with clouds which remind me of that fancy picture of Turner's, 'Ulysses deriding Polyphemus'; while the sea is of a bottle-green. The same earth and sky as when Dido played the trick with the bullock's hide in order to win the site of her future city, or, later on, died for the love which she could not command. It is a region fraught with romance, and it takes me all my time to keep to everyday facts, of which there are plenty this day to note, as we pass along that coast of Tunis. Now a burst of sunshine, making a brilliant gleam of emerald on the distant waters, with a tawny glow of gold and red over the purple shore, like, for all the world, autumn-dyed bracken and heather in bloom on a distant moorland. It is astonishing how little difference there is between a scene at home and a scene abroad when viewed afar off: the changes are more rapid and metallic as we near the sun, softer and moister in our own land—and that is all, so long as we don't get near enough to define the flora, or fashion of the buildings.

As I sketch, we pass a town. Custom has given me sharp discernment, so that I know from the shape of the light markings that they are flat houses, and not rocks, and, borrowing the glass from my neighbours, make out that I am right, and also can see enough to correct my sketch. Reaches of headland, with a finely-clouded sky and strong effects of light and shade. Canê Island looms in sight, with its lighthouse, of which I get a sketch; then the bold island of Zembra, looking like Salisbury Crags set upon the waters—deep red colour, and sterile, with splits and gorges; a bitter mass of rocks to go against in a storm.

It is evening when we get up to Cape Bon, with an orange

and russet sky, diversified by heavy clouds of intense purple, against which the crimson glare of the lighthouse shows out strongly—an ominous sky, with just a tiny space of clear beyond, like a sleeping tarn in the midst of a table-land; the most suitable sky for this part, where crime sighs out its years of forced penance on that lofty, tower-capped rock, Pantellaria. Through the night air we hear, or seem to hear, a chorus of groans, accompanied by the stern music of rattling chains.

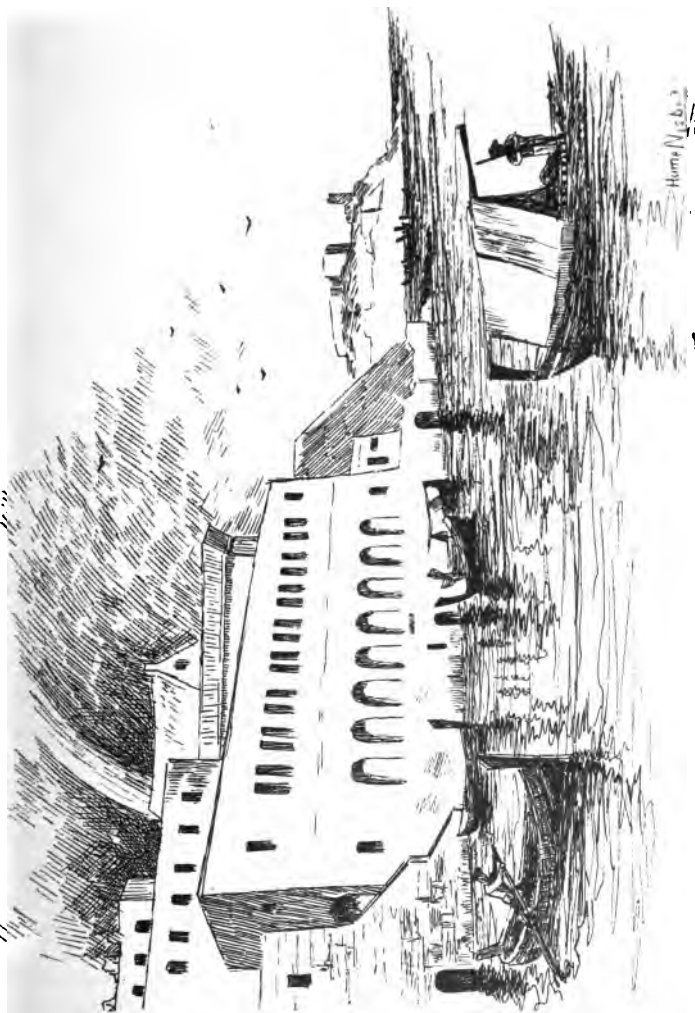
CHAPTER II

MALTA

Places of Interest—Guides and Boatmen—Lace-making—Canary-vendors, &c.

I ROUSED myself, on this our seventh day from London, in good time to see the harbour of Valletta—our first rest on the journey. To the right of us, as we drop anchor, is the Lazaretto; while to the left rear up the yellow, stone fortifications of Ricasoli, St. Angelo, Manoel, St. Elmo, &c. In front are the open waters of the Mediterranean, of a translucent tint almost impossible to describe, except by the name of the pigment which I used chiefly in making my sketch, viz., cobalt-green; a deep blue sky when not overcast, although at times it feels very chilly, with heavy hail-showers, and black thunderclouds looming up behind, and bringing into startling relief the yellow- and white-washed buildings.

Malta, the graveyard of chivalry in more senses than one, the stronghold of the Knights of St. John, the city of relics—relics of feudal ages, church architecture, superstition, and diseases obsolete in all other quarters of the globe. Here you may see the Scriptures more fully illustrated in the way of bodily infirmities than even at Port Said or Suez. Here a charitable man might be a modern Cræsus, and yet come to want in less than a week, without diminishing the



THE LAZARETTO

frightful destitution; for here beggars multiply fast enough to populate a new world; they crowd about you like flies round a bit of tasty beef in the summer months. You must rub against them—nay, blend with them and all their varied suggestions of nastiness, whether you like it or not. There is no getting away from them, any more than from the guides. Were Malta twice as crammed with reminiscences of a glorious past than it is, it would not be worth the penalty of having to mix with that fearsome cloud of moving witnesses to the imperfections of Nature.

We hear all about the places to visit before we leave the ship: the Palace of the Grand Master, with its corridors and armoury; the Market-Place and Granary, the Aqueduct, and lovely church of St. John. Also, one passenger goes into raptures over the beauties of Florian, its mummies, &c. But little is said of the beggars or the guides, else we might have stayed on board, and braved the coal-dust in preference.

As this city of walls and fortifications, fine silk lace and silver filigree work, mantillas and high-heeled Parisian boots, rags and loathesomenesses, importunate guides and car-drivers, mud of the shade of whitewash and the adhesiveness of glue; narrow streets, down which the sun drifts with a dazzling golden or white lustre, leaving shadows of a blue-grey, where the visitor may vainly try to stand back on purpose to see the rich carvings on the house-fronts or moresque lattices in blue and green, where ruddy-cheeked brunettes peep out mischievously, but vainly; for in front chatter the guides, who cannot be dismissed, while about you closes a heaving mass of tattered humanity, like a roaring ocean around a rock—as this city is now a common place of call, which all going eastward or southward must see and know as much as the natives will permit to be seen, and as it has been described so much already, I would pass from it with as few comments as possible, seeing that I can only speak with any pleasure of what I saw while on the deck of the ship ‘Parramatta,’ the rest being a hideous nightmare of horrible faces and fearful smells, with an indistinct impression of white walls and blue sky.

From the deck I saw novel-shaped boats darting about, and painted a bright green or blue colour with red stripes; sunburnt boatmen, with bonnets like the old Scotch ones, and skinny, bare arms, looking like half-dressed monkeys, as they stood upright while they rowed.

‘Give them sixpence only,’ cried out the captain as we got into our different boats; this I did on landing, to be followed, as I walked up the steps, by the boatmen and hundreds of their friends, cursing, imploring, and reviling us, as we kept steadily on, neither looking at them nor replying to their abuse or pitiful entreaties: and all this fuss because we had given them their just fare. London cabmen have a manner with them not dissimilar to the boatmen of Malta, only that they seem to curse you in a manlier style; the Maltese have a sneaking, cowardly way, much more distasteful than the Cockney habit of sarcastic extortion.

After the boatmen had become merged with the crowd of beggars, the guides took us up. We ordered them away without result, for others came swarming up with their explanations. We swore at them (cursing is the prevailing mode of communication between the stranger and the native); they retorted with a bow and a pleasant smile. One tattered specimen took bodily possession, and would not relinquish his supposed prey after trying all means to rouse his sense of pride, even to turning him about and kicking him (a mode of dismissal, by the way, which, fortunately for us and our ignorance of the laws of the land, Malta being independent and self-governed, we administered in a quiet street, or we might have found ourselves prisoners for the assault). It appears that, besides lace-making and begging, this is one of the ways in which the people of Malta manage to eke out an honest existence—to aggravate strangers into an assault, and then get them imprisoned on the charge until the vessel goes without them, after which they are liberated, and given over to the ravishers until the next ship comes in; this we learnt afterwards, and were able to congratulate ourselves on our escape. Meanwhile, we were compelled to leave our forced friend alone, as he remarked that he was only taking a walk, and had as much right in the streets as we had. We owned he had more



right, and allowed him to explain what he liked, going about as we felt inclined, without heeding his words or frantic cries for us to pass up certain ways.

Up the streets with many steps from the waterways to the Strada Reale. Here we intended posting our letters and returning straightway, but, meeting some of the passengers, were induced to see some of the buildings, which I do not intend to describe. We saw them, and would have admired them also if we could have been let alone to be able to enjoy the place. Stay a week or two till the people are used to your face; then, visitors say, if you give them nothing, they will leave you alone. I doubt it much, for hope seems eternal in the beggar's breast. Our guide kept at us like grim death, and not even the Church was sacred from him; while on either side, completely blocking up our range of vision, hovered two cabs, moving as we moved, and stopping when we paused, like vultures watching a flock of sheep.

'We don't want cabs.'

No retort beyond the inviting smiles.

'We can guide ourselves.'

'I am not a guide, but one poor tailor,' replied our attendant.

'We don't require clothes.'

'But I have a wife and seven children.'

'We are not accountable for that.'

'But, excuse me, you are losing your way.'

It was then that we lost our patience and gave him the corporal hint that he had better go; but he only smiled, and thanked us for the civility, and for a few paces hung behind, very soon to be once more at our elbow.

(If you are in a hurry to see Malta, pay two guides to keep the others back.)

Near to King's Reading-Rooms I noticed amongst the crowd of maimed, lame, and sore-eyed applicants for charity, one old woman without any eyes, or signs that they had ever been in her face, which curious sight so moved even my numbed pity that, without considering the matter, I was just-dipping my hand into my pocket in search of a copper, when a young English officer passing at the time, perceiving my action, laid hold of me forcibly, and in an excited manner asked me what I was going to do.

'Only spare a copper to that poor woman.'

'Then for God's sake don't do it, if you wish to get away yourself, or leave the streets open for any one else; the news that a stranger has been known to give a copper would spread like wildfire through the Island, and cause a blockade.'

I put my penny back again, after testifying my gratitude to this genuine English gentleman for saving me from that awful catastrophe, and crushed my way through the pitiful mass.

The lace-making is most laborious work, and frightfully badly paid, the workers never making, even at their hardest, half enough to keep them in bread; so that it becomes compulsory for them to seek for sustenance elsewhere. I admire the delicate texture, but cannot look upon the finely-spun meshes without thinking upon other meshes, of a coarser texture, which envelop the lives of these poor women, who sit, day after day, wearing out their eyes spinning fine webs for the adornment of vanity, with the forces of Nature tearing at their vitals in the urging on to live—a life not worth the labour of keeping together, and for which they are in no way accountable. They make, at the most, two-pence per day.

The oranges of Malta are the finest in the world. We see them hanging on the trees in the Governor's garden, and a strong temptation comes over me to stop, and make a rough sketch of the rich green shadow, with golden balls, against the whitewashed walls and street, filled with broad lights and strong depths, but must resist the temptation by reason of that awful guide.

Getting again to the quay, where we had once more a wild scene before we got away, we made our passage, by energetic pushing, through the lines of vendors of cigars, tobacco, lace, ornaments, oranges, and sponges. One man with canaries in cages stopped us at the water's edge with:

'Want a canary, sir?'

'Are they for eating?' we asked him, to get rid of his importunity, and in a spirit of Mark-Twainish jocularly.

'No, no! they are for singing.'

'Ah! we don't want them, if that is what they are for.'

A brilliant thought struck the vendor, then he bolted after us, shouting :

'Yes, yes! they are for eating. Very good pie; buy the lot. And leaving his cages in charge of an assistant, he made off to tell the canary-vendors that there was a man who ate canaries, and might buy all that were in Malta; and a fine time we had with cages after that, until we steamed away.

We got rid, after much effort, of our guides and boatmen, and made sketches when we could find a spot partly clear from coal-dust (it is a fearsome ordeal on board ship during coaling-time, when all get the appearance of sweeps, and every place is covered thickly with the fine, jetty dust); and by 10 o'clock P.M. we were once more in the open sea, leaving this relic of old Phœnicia without much regret—the Melita of St. Paul, about which, as we read in the guide-books, a poet wrote :

Malta—the nursing-mother of heroes, and mirror of ancient days.

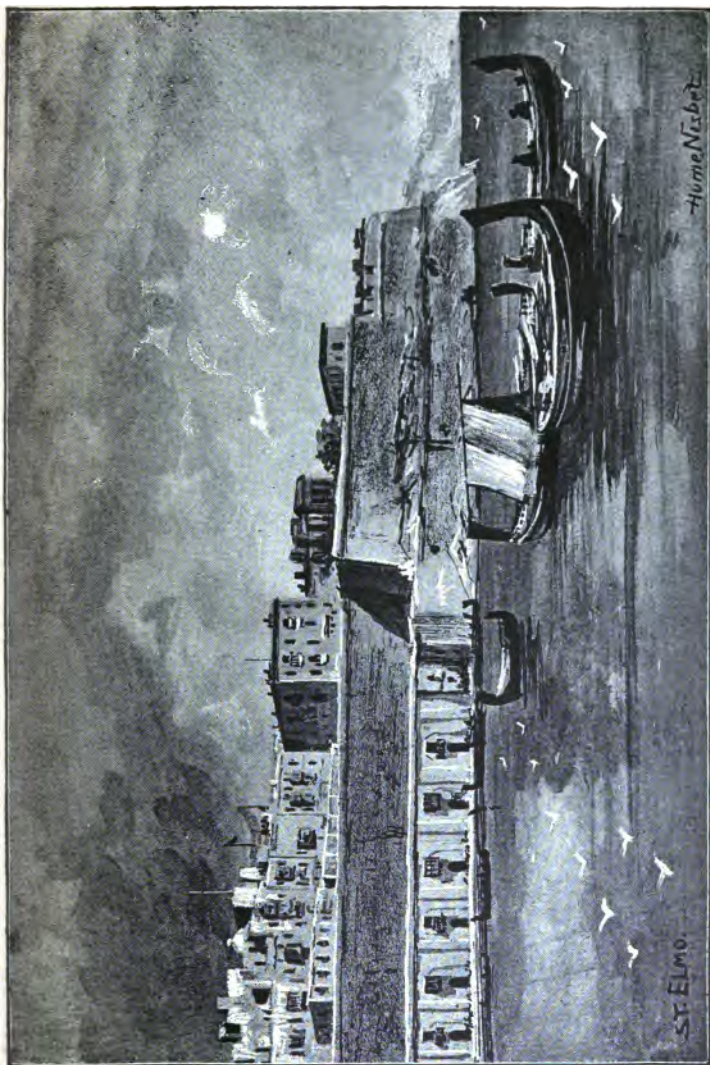
We thought upon our noble guide (who, by the way, returned to his spouse fee-less after all), the father of seven heroes and heroines of Malta, and reckoned that his mother had great credit of her nursing.

CHAPTER III

TO KANTARA, IN SUEZ CANAL

At Sea—Death of Scedy-boy—Port Said—Coaling—Arabs—Suez Canal—Mirage—Night Effect.

Feb. 8th.—At sea one of the Scedy-boys (African stokers) died to-day about dawn, and was buried at sunset; his disease a most curious one, which we don't find, any more than we find elephantiasis, amongst Europeans. This the sailors call 'cussedness,' and the Africans, 'dibble dibble.' The boy simply became tired of his life, and seemingly had the rare faculty of being able to resign it when and where



ST. ELMO

he pleased. He chose to die at daybreak, and his companions buried him, according to their own sacred rites, secretly, as the sun was sinking below the distant horizon. A few of the passengers knew what was going on ; but we were requested to keep back, and not to look, as they do not like unbelievers to see their ceremonies. So we left them alone.

Feb. 10th.—Reached Port Said about seven A.M., and had a good view of the breakwater, lighthouse, and entrance of the Canal ; also saw the black fins of a couple of sharks in the harbour, with the buildings, half-French, half-Oriental, and the crowd ashore—Arabs, Egyptians, Greeks, French, Italians, and other races, all mixing, with their many-tinted robes, blue, white, and red predominating ; the rich tints on the house-walls, bazaars and fruit-stands ; the dhows and smaller boats cramming up the docks and landing-places ; the coal-barges being rowed across from the other side of the harbour, commanded by an Arab chief, and filled with demoniac, black figures, with cowl-like head-pieces of sacking, chaunting a song as they all pulled together, with the chief standing upright in their centre, gloomy and stern.

The ‘Parramatta’ has hardly anchored when the docks are clustering with picturesque forms : Stalwart Arabians stalking about, with flashy turbans and snowy robes, spitting at our backs when we are not looking ; for we are not yet at peace with them, and they show their hatred when they can, even while cheating us as impartially as if they were our greatest friends and relations. The Eastern juggler is there also, with his rabbit and snakes, doing some marvellous sleight-of-hand tricks, and the usual vendors of photographs and Oriental knick-knacks manufactured in Birmingham.

Going ashore, we found the quay well-lined with guides and donkey-boys ; only here the guides are merry, and full of good-natured jokes, if mendacious, and it is no discomfort to be followed about by them, as at Malta. We were compelled to keep to the European quarters, as the Arab quarters are forbidden, owing to a present epidemic of small-pox. However, saturating our handkerchiefs with

mild carbolic acid, we penetrated as far as we dared go—far enough to be satisfied with the smell and dirt; and as there was little of interest to see in the safe streets, we strolled about with a little Egyptian boy, who was very smart and funny in his remarks, until it was about dinner-time, looking at the shops, and resisting, as far as possible, the mania for buying articles which we knew to be rubbish.

Passing down one of the side streets, we missed our little guide for a moment, and, as he had our parcels, we looked round to see if he had not run off with them. We saw a dark, evil-looking, and dirty half-caste of some kind cuffing him about, in a very merciless style, at an alley-corner, from which the mangy-looking prowler had emerged. We turned to give some assistance to our little friend, when his bully left off, and shuffled into shadow once more.

‘Is that your father?’ we asked, thinking it must be so, as the boy had not resisted very much, and now merely shook himself together, without offering any explanation.

‘My fadder! No sar!’ with great scorn. ‘He one dirty thief, gentlemen, wanting the parcels, that’s all.’

‘Oh, that’s all, is it?’

‘Yes, sar; he gentleman who waits at dark corners when Englishman pass drunk at night, and stab.’

The boy made his simple statement about this stabbing thief-gentleman as if it was quite an ordinary incident, and we felt how nicely adapted the streets of Port Said are for getting drunk in at nights.

There is nothing beyond the streets to be seen at Port Said—a sandy flat, with hardly a tree, except some dwarfed specimens in what they call, by courtesy, gardens; one or two music-halls, where an orchestra of German ladies performs, open to the road, with lager-beer stands and gaming-tables; and a place which they call the Theatre, where fearful performances of the variety order are perpetrated, and where everything is most excessively dull. Cold mornings and nights at this time of the year, and very hot during the day, it must be very hard living here for the 15,000 inhabitants, with only the excitement of ships calling for coals.

The coal-heavers do a thriving business, though, and

produce, as they load ships by torchlight; a scene like the Inferno, yet most impressive with the lights from vessels, the revolving electric light from the lighthouse-tower, the brilliant stars—or, it may be, moonlight—and those dark, shapeless barges, with their blazing tripods, and on the gangways the black figures rushing constantly up and down with their baskets of coal.

We spent a weary hour or two at the Theatre, looking at the men with their wives, a mixture of all nationalities, sitting knitting and drinking, while our ears were well-nigh deafened with the horrible screechings from the stage. For a little while it was rather interesting to watch the different types around us, or, during the intervals, look on at the roulette-tables; but after a time we were glad to get back to our berths and think of the morrow.

Feb. 11th.—A sharp, misty morning, with coal-loaders going to work, being towed past the cabin window as we look out to see the sunrise. They look ghostly, with their dark profiles and peaked, cowl-like coverings, amongst the frosty, grey and red, lustreless sun, and the blurred shapes of cranks, coal-sheds and dhows beyond—a bloodshot sun, blended every few moments by rolling tissues of green-grey vapour.

As I pass along the gangway towards the bath-room, I see some Arabs working at the aft-hatch, under the directions of a powerful and ferocious-looking chief; they are tugging away at the cross-bar—a heavy beam, which half a dozen of the men seemingly cannot move. He loses patience, evidently, at their slow movements or lack of effort, for, with a word or two in Arabic, resting his left hand against the iron, upright post of the framework, he leans down, and, taking the beam by the end nearest to him, hoists it clear up, and so lays it down on the deck beside him, with no more effort, apparently, than if it had been a walking-stick; after which, with a scowl round at me for daring to look on while he so far forgot his dignity as a sheik, he dusted his hands and adjusted his robe. I looked with wonder at this prodigious feat of strength; for it took me all my time to move one end of it, and I did not believe it possible for any single man to lift it as he had done, staff-fashion, and

with so little effort. The third mate, who was superintending, smiled at my face of astonishment, and informed me that this was an ordinary specimen of the men who had broken our square at Abu Klea, who united to this appalling strength the terrible fearlessness of bigotry. As I looked, and heard all this, a vivid picture of Khartoum rose up before me, with Gordon, the hero, alone amongst those ferocious hordes; the march through the desert of our soldiers, and the sudden attacks when they were dead-beat with bodily fatigue, faint with hunger, and parched with mortal thirst. And while my back crept and curved with the icy horror of a hideous nightmare, my heart rose, and tingled with the pride of our United Kingdom, and gratitude to the father and mother who had given to me, as a birthright, a place in the bravest and most independent portion of it—Scotland; it felt like being, amongst the Romans of Italy, a distinct native of Rome.

A warm forenoon as we entered the Suez Canal, this triumph of Lesseps, and before us a slow journey of four to five miles an hour along banks of grey, sad-coloured sand, with few objects of interest after the first novelty of being in the desert wears away, frequent stoppages to allow other ships which have the precedence to pass, occasional groups of wandering tribes, or caravans crossing to or from Jerusalem, with frequent mirages.

These mirages are not what we have supposed them to be. At times, as we look over the desert, we see patches of water, flat and glistening, with stretches of brown and violet tinted sands between and in front, and only by being told do we know there is no water near. This is no delusion of the eye, but a real gas—vapour being sucked from the sand, and beaten upon by the white rays of the sun. At other times the ground rises, or appears to do so, and very slight elevations become exaggerated to high mounds. Again, objects at a distance are carried forward, and made important, unless they are of themselves insignificant; thus, a scrubby bush looks like a tree, all the more mysterious from the foot being cut off by those level lines of white heat-vapours, so that it seems as if rising from a stream or lake, the bottom part magnified and indistinct, like a reflection.

I am hard at work sketching as we crawl along, or lie-to in the sidings—now a vessel waiting upon us, or a flat stretch of low-toned variation and subtle distance, unrelieved by subject, and therefore the more delicious to the artistic sense, with a sky above of that coloured monotone which intense midday heat produces, the sand absorbing all the glare until it appears almost like shadow ; now a stretch of stone colour, with the shadow sides of the horizon throwing it out in strong relief ; sometimes a long level without a break, except that mud-stirred, green roll of waters along the slaty sides ; at other times a cutting, with low cliffs of sandstone, and where the mile-posts only break the wavy line ; sometimes sloping banks of loose sand, along which Arabs, with their white, blue, or cinnamon-tinted robes, girt up to the knees, walk in line, towing along their sail-furled dhows ; again, a family on the march, sullen and 'vengeful, who stop to shake their fists at us, and show their hatred of the invaders by spitting (a few months before, and they took more hostile methods of displaying their hatred, while ships had to go through the Canal with bulwarks protected by bags of sand). They save their powder and lead now, but are lavish with their curses as we pass by.

A long stretch of desert, with the impression about it which a soldier's account of a walk over it after Abu Klea gave my mind. They were following up the track of the advance army, which was some weeks before them ; and to all my queries as to description of the way or his sufferings, he could impart to me no definite idea, not having been impressed by anything, except the *taste* of the unburied dead, which loaded the air, and got down his throat, and stuck there for life. I seemed to want no more to see it all as I now saw it.

As we proceed on our way, I get a good sketch of distant Port Said, with the line of deep-coloured Canal verging from a point, tall banks of sand on either side, and a French ship waiting, behind us, in the foreground. It is our first stop, near the Ras-el-Ech village, with its large signal-staff and half-dozen houses. As I look back at the soft and tender spread of blue sea, with the lighthouse gleaming

white, and forest of masts, I feel astonished to discover that I have been sketching a mirage, Port Said being too low-lying for me to see it at that point. However, it is a good semblance of Port Said, and therefore good enough for my purpose; it goes to prove how much like reality a mirage sometimes is.

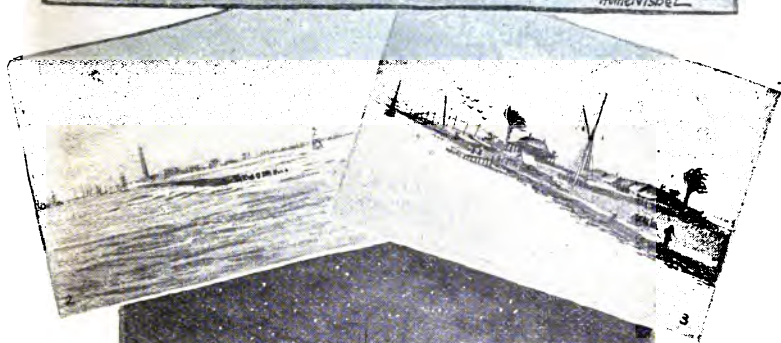
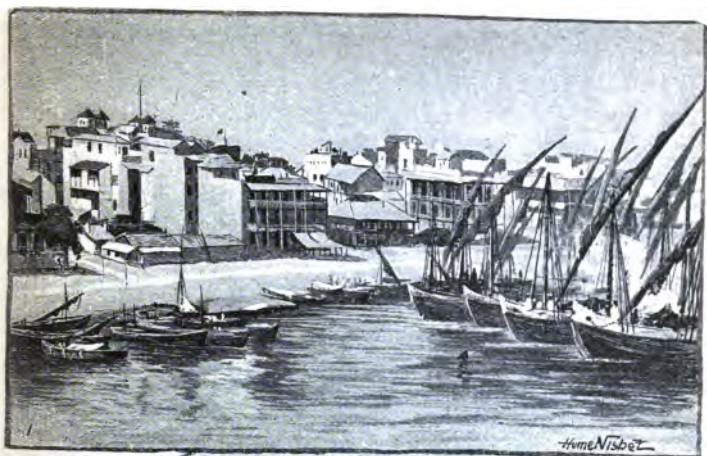
We pass Lake Menzaleh, with the strips of sand on its margin crowded with bird-life—flamingoes, &c.—and looking like surf beating the sea-shore; streaks of sand, interlarded with grass strips, and with specks of prismatic colouring here and there over it; an Arab hut, with reclining and standing figures about; and in the green-and-blue Canal a buoy painted bright vermilion.

Groups of Arabs with white turbans, yellow, orange, blue, and red coverings; the females mantled with black veils, and the little children naked, having cast aside their faded rags to be the better able to run along abreast of us crying, 'Backsheesh.'

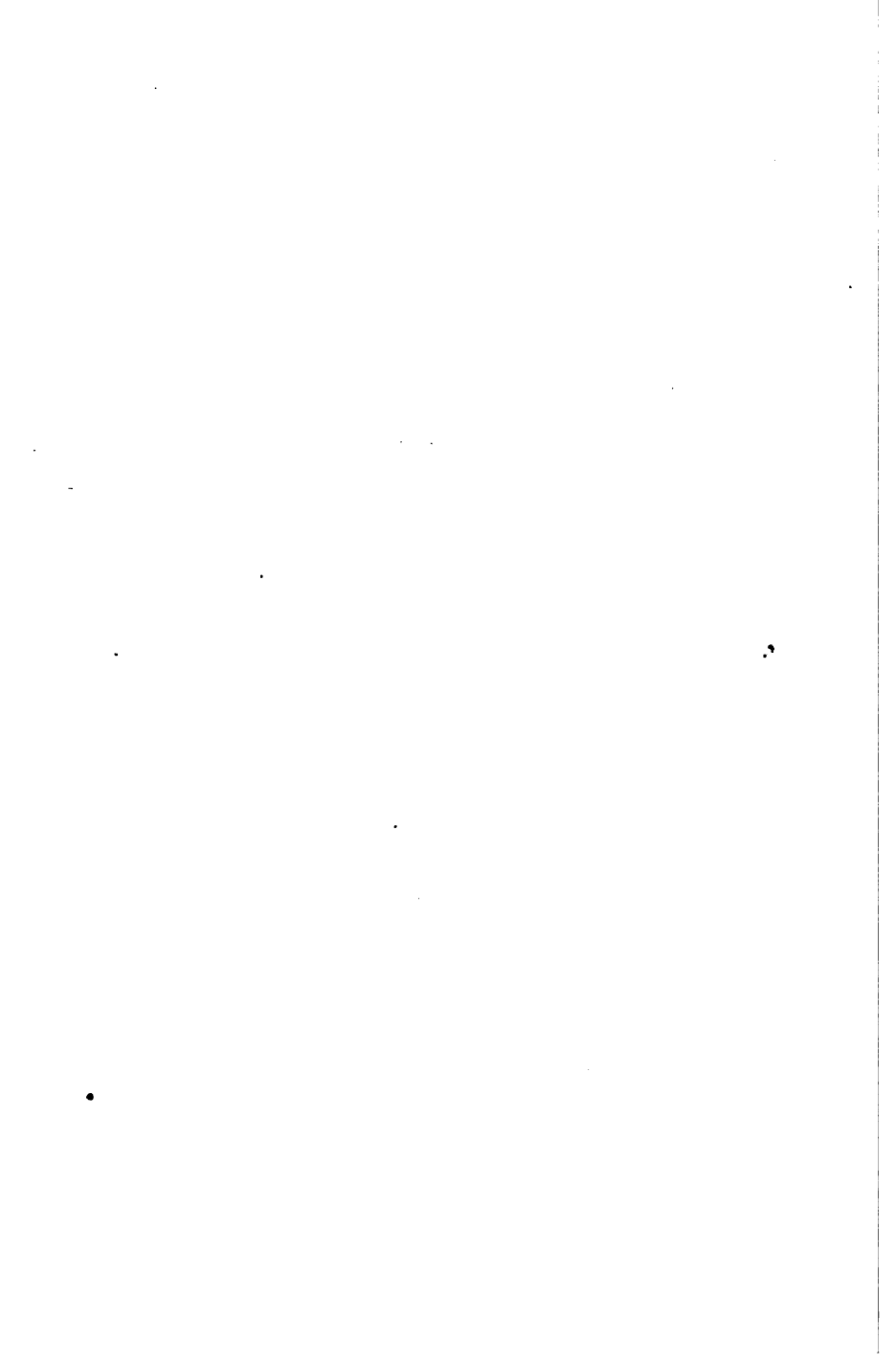
After many interruptions and rests by the way at the different sidings, we bring to anchor at sundown at Kantara, twenty-five miles only from Port Said, and beside the old road still used by caravans to Syria and Jerusalem. We watch a fine sunset over the desert, with the last camels of a caravan being towed over in the ferry-boat, while the others, with their drivers, stand or kneel outside the courtyard of the desert caravansary, waiting patiently for their fodder. In the water, which is shallow at the banks, some Arab boys paddle and splash about, begging for half-piastres to be thrown in so that they might dive for them, and retorting, with ready wit and merry grin, to the jokes from those on board.

The utter unconsciousness of these boys and young men—for they range from the ages of eight to eighteen—is very refreshing, if at times a little embarrassing. One—a finely-developed youth of about seventeen—stands boldly up in the water, which reaches to the middle of his thighs, after having cast aside his only garment, facing the whole ship's company, and crying out for silver coins. They do not care much about diving for copper.

After sunset a solemn night steals upon us by swift degrees, with the half-moon shining softly over the desert,



PORT SAID AND SUEZ CANAL



and the countless globes of mellow light beaming upon us from that great, sombre space. The mighty throbbings of the engines are silent; and this unaccustomed silence and lack of vibration gives to us the feeling of a void. It is difficult, after living upon a moving thing so long, to be able to feel at rest when it rests; the sense of abeyance weighs upon one like a depression, even although we are not without sounds all round.

The Arabs' distant chaunt at the caravansary reaches us at intervals when other sounds cease. The lights—three bright lamps, with a single reflection in the ripples—from the French troopship which follows in our wake pale the chaster lustre of the moon and stars. Their bands are playing English and French airs alternately; while in front of us lies a Turkish war-sloop, from the shadow of which come subdued clashings of cymbals. In the music-saloon they are playing upon the piano a dance-air, and on the after-poop, outside the saloon, the forms of the dancers pass and repass, blocking up continually the electric lights from the open windows, through which the piano-tones float. On deck, amidships, Arabs are crowding, with loads of fruit (oranges, dates, nuts, and raisins), while their dhows lie alongside—dark, indistinct figures, with sweeping robes, having gleams of direct colour where the lamplight strikes; a mingled vision of shadow and half-toned lights, with touches of sharp definitions, and a mingled harmony of subdued discord, chastened by the mystery of night—piano, brass instruments, and strange voices.

CHAPTER IV

FROM KANTARA, IN SUEZ CANAL, TO SOCOTRA

Kantara—Sunrise over the Desert—Ballah Lakes and Villages—Timsah—Ismailia—Suez—Hills of Attáka—Afterglow over Sinai—Donkeys and Guides of Suez—Troubles of an Amateur Dragoman—The Red Sea—Mount Gharib—Jebel Teir—Twelve Apostles—Abyssinia—Bab-el-Mandeb—Gulf of Aden—Socotra.

Feb. 12th.—We wake up to a sunrise this morning which reconciles me to the dreariness of the desert:—a lemon-

tinted, crystalline space, with saffron and violet-grey feather-streaks floating slantways, and birds crossing the clear portion, making, with their solid darkness, the feathery clouds grow soft and aerial. A rosy fume floats low down, and melts from the desert to the lemon-clearness—that enchanted sand-spread, which, in this hour of sunless glowing, takes on strange, illusive shapes of far-distant Pyramids, with level, sleeping lakes of lonely, shaded waters; a monument of saffron, with lemon lustre, rose-blushings, and silver-grey, overlapping suggestions of amber, as shadow abides not on the earth. Then, while we look longingly, and watch the dark, fluttering wings of the flying birds, they seem to be dyed with bloodstains; and while we are yet wondering at the sudden change from black to bright red, a straight shaft of golden light smites us between the eyelids, and forces us to turn aside, half-dazed, for the God of Day has risen.

To-day we are going on, without so many stoppages as we had yesterday, past the Ballah Lakes, El Ferdane and El Guisp villages, with the high banks, mosque, and floating bridge, into the blue waters of Lake Timsah—where we get a view of the Khedive's Summer Palace—white-sailed dhows skimming its surface, and crowds of sea-birds rising above the red buoys, and circling about on the blue-grey sky; the yellow banks of sand whereon the Palace is built, and the lighter stone-tint upon the rounded mounds behind, against which the dark masts of our French follower appear, as it glides softly round the sand-point.

At Ismailia some of our soldier-friends leave us to join the army; after which we pass the Serapeum railway-station, with its ruins of monument, Persian and Egyptian relics, and on to the broad waters of the Great Bitter Lake, 'Amer,' with the Gèneffié range of mountains abruptly rising on the south-west.

The effect is ever changing as the day advances, when the Chebrewet Peak shows up purple-grey. The sky appears bleached, and the water green, with a brown strip of sand between, and the houses at the distant stations mere specks of white and red. Along the sandbanks, of a bright maize-tint, the sky is green, and the water like sapphires, with brown-madder sails of fishing-craft.

Through the Little Bitter Lake, and past Kabrette, Shalloufeh, and Madama, with a long afternoon of variety and hard work ; and then, as we near Suez, with the sun setting over the hills of Attáka, and mark its line of masts, houses, spires, and the deep shadow of the hills beyond, with patches of dark sand and emerald-coloured, shining swamps between, before the rich spread of amber intervenes, we feel that our slow journey is about over, and that we are soon to drop anchor about the place where the Children of Israel made their marvellous passage from the land of bondage into the dreary wilderness.

The sun is out of sight, and wondrous afterglow has begun to paint the western space with its prismatic combinations. Above floats a most romantic half-moon, like the Turkish ensign hung up aloft over old Egypt—the *Land of the Circle subordinate to the Crescent* ; or like eternity curbed by time. The sky is saffron-coloured, with a constant pulsation of change, rose-coloured rays slanting up to the blue, which is gradually creeping downward, and becoming green and violet, with the rugged outlines of Attáka becoming duskier, more sharply defined, and flat against the opal-like clearness beyond. At the base of the mountains grey mists begin to gather, and the town is mainly distinguished by its lights.

Over towards Syria the hills of Sinai are rearing up against a mellow green sky, their harshness and barrenness softened in this hour of enchantment, for they look like blush-rose petals piled up one above another, with shadow sides of delicate mauve—mounds of roses reared upon golden-tinted sands, like those ripe fields of corn with the fame of which Joseph tempted down his brethren—and the land-swell of the Canal appearing like green marsh-grass.

Feb. 13th.—We only stay long enough at Suez to receive our letters. Last night we had to content ourselves with fishing for sharks, as the captain would not allow us to land in the dark, lest we might be murdered by the unfriendly Arabs, who take all chances that they can to molest the hated infidels ; we caught one small shark, and gave him to the scedy-boys, by whom he was greatly relished.

However, what we did not succeed with last night we

manage to accomplish at daybreak to-day. Getting into a dhow, we sailed ashore, much amused by the captain of it, who told us many funny lies about his wives and family, which I cannot now repeat. Then we rode the space between the sea-shore and the town on the donkeys of Suez, named after celebrities of England. I whipped up, and tumbled twice from the patient back of the 'Bishop of London'; while my companions rode 'Mrs. Langtry' and 'Henry Irving.' Very good asses they all were, and justly worthy of the fame which they had won.

The donkey-drivers ran all the way, urging the talented beasts on, and encouraging them after the custom of the country. My driver being ambitious to attain to the rank of a dragoman, offered to show me the sights; and, anticipating some sport between the legitimate dragomans and this illegal usurper, I accepted him at once for a shilling extra over and above his donkey-fee, and rode triumphantly into town. Nor was I disappointed at the result.

We have only leisure to rush over the town, which, although small—having a mixed population of a little over 1,300 inhabitants, French, Arabs, Turks, Italians, &c.—well repays our visit, both historically and for its picturesque streets. Our extempore guide has a hard time of it with the host of regular dragomen: but he, being armed with our authority, held his own bravely through all the wild storm of foaming mouths, fearful oaths, and wrangling, while through this raging mob we calmly rode, our donkey-driver appearing and disappearing as he savagely fought his passage, with turban untwisted from his head, dress nearly torn in pieces, and matted beard clotted with white flecks. I never saw such a picture of excitement and insane fury in my life—all for the sake of a shilling; water-carriers, stall-keepers, goats and dogs, all joined in the *mêlée*, with shrill screamings and loud yelpings; a tossing confusion of legs, arms, and heads, with articles of *virtu* and food overturned, and mixing with the black mud, while our donkey kept on merrily up and down the narrow passages, with a maddened mob behind and around us.

At a butcher's stall we saw a gay young butcher whispering compliments in the veil-covered ear of a Moslem

woman, his hand on his heart ; while she listened with bent, concealed head, and with one brown, fly-swarmed eye only visible, paying no heed to the infernal din of our advent. Near at hand, at a shoe-stall, sat a crosslegged Turk, surrounded by his red and yellow, pointed shoes, solemnly smoking his hubble-bubble. A crowd of women with heads covered and breasts exposed squatted on the ground, suckling babies, while half-naked children rolled about in the mud, with each eye-corner clustering with flies.

As our tidal wave advanced, breaking down all barriers, the woman caught my eye, and whispered something to the young butcher, who turned towards us, grinning from ear to ear, and showing his white teeth ; and even as he did so the mob swept over them, and scattered them in an instant—amorous butcher, veiled woman, smoking greybeard, nursing-mothers, and mud-daubed, fly-clustered children ; while we had an indistinct vision of brass pots, legs of mutton, pointed shoes, and writhing, screaming humanity, as we rode forward into the awning-spread shadow of the bazaar. We passed through Suez—with a fair display of wares for sale in narrow, highly-perfumed streets—and left behind us a confused mass of wreckage ; but our guide turned up before we had left the last building, not half so much damaged as we could have supposed, panting, to drive us back and claim his well-earned shilling.

We got back in good time to make some notes in outline of the scenery from where we are lying before they got up steam and weighed anchor : Suez from the sea, with its square, stone fronts, the mountains of Sinai low-lying beyond, dhows, coal-barges, steam-packets, and all the animation of the sea-birds, for ever on the wing in vast masses or detached groups.

The sea is of a luminous grey in the morning coolness, with gleaming white or richly-shaded brown sails, as the little Arabian craft dart about over the broad surface from Suez to Jebel Attáka, and float from blue haze in the distance to pink, purple, and russet in the clear portions.

Jebel Attáka, or the Mountains of Deliverance, is conical-peaked, with deep ruts which show wild defiles, and sterile projections—a range of stony and treeless ranges, with

nothing save rocks to shelter the weary wanderer from the blazing rays of the midday sun. Kolzoom, the Place of Destruction, it is fitted by Nature to be, although bathed this morning with such a rosy glamour: the trap where Pharaoh's hosts were slain, when they followed that bright column of fire through those deep, winding valleys, with the lurid reflection flickering over precipices, and dyeing with a dusky ruddiness that shifting patch upon the blackness of the upper sky; Pharaoh and his hosts gingerly winding their way, with their chariot-wheels jolting against the stones, and getting fast stuck in the deep crevices, lured on by that distant fire-gleam, but delayed by the accidents of the way, while the fugitives trod on lightly, with their booty on their backs, untrammelled by the hindrances of pomp.

I look towards those rose-coloured hills as I sketch, and seem to see that momentous journey from the banks of the Nile, over those mountains, and across the 'Sea of Sari' towards the plains which Sinai terminates—a short journey if you go straight—and pictures rise up of the stumblings of the infatuated Egyptians (a fatal line of march, little more disastrous than our own late British marches over nearly the same tracks), getting into the Valley of Chariots (Wady el Araba) by night, with cursing drivers and plunging horses, while the line behind is strewn with broken carriages, and the Pharaoh's astute foster-brother (who times his march to suit the tides) leads his gang of redeemed slaves safely through the danger by the light of that blazing column.

By 10.30 A.M. we are off on our way down the Gulf of Suez towards the Red Sea, leaving the Well of Moses, Tur, and Djebel Mousa for our return journey; past Mount Gharib, on the Egyptian side, rearing up 8,000 feet of bleak desolation; in sight of the Arabian coast, with its distant hills, and upon a cobalt sea, choppy with small, white-crested, curling waves.

Feb. 18th.—We have, after to-day, a long stretch of clear ocean before us, where, beyond sea and sky effects, with the ordinary ship incidents not worth remarking upon here, we have little to take note of likely to be of interest. We were fortunate in our passage down the Red Sea, with



SUEZ AND RED SEA, ETC.

a head-wind keeping us comparatively cool; yet we are rapidly getting our summer clothes out, and the decks are becoming like a flower-garden with gay prints, muslin, and coloured lawn-jackets and the picturesque appearance of the coloured sailors, in their native summer costumes and with softly-gliding steps.

The Red Sea is dangerous to unwary vessels. We see traces of wrecks lining the shores—vessels cast by rough storms on to the coral reefs, and ruthlessly plundered by the robber tribes. I note Jebel Teir, a volcanic island with two peaks and sloping sides, very desolate. We pass it with a rough sea, and spray dashing over our bows. The Twelve Apostles, under a cloudy half-moon and swelshing waves, with foam-effects very lovely and silvery.

The Abyssinian mountains, rearing up 10,000 feet; Mocha, veiled with mist-wreaths, and piratical-looking craft hovering about; and through the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb (the Gate of Tears), rocky-peaked and dreary, with the island, lighthouse, and fortifications of Perim, where they say forty ships of the line could anchor with safety one hundred yards from shore, but, as seen under the boisterous wind and white, foam-broken blue and green waters, not a very tempting spot to be near. Its shores are lined with the remains of wrecks, the hulls cast up, and bleaching like skulls, with bare masts sticking out of the waves.

We have got free of the Red Sea hot-blast, and the rugged purple and buff tinted Gate of Tears, and now are crossing the Gulf of Aden, and opposite the English-occupied Island of Socotra, a magnificent island from the artist's point of view, with huge mountains, bringing back to my mind the Grampians, rugged and diversified, although now softened by a hazy atmosphere with rich cloud forms and effects.

It is a pleasure to sail past the bold headlands, and look into the wooded valleys and hillsides, broken up by the majestic precipices; mighty rocks clothed with olive and tamarind trees, with the grand, massive outlines of Ras Haniff and Tamareda, and the rounded domes of the city of Manatoob, sheltered by the mighty background of rock and foliage.

The clouds are rolling, and changing every second, with deep and intense shadow sides and brilliant high lights, and with shafts of sunlight darting through the rent edges, and striking athwart the purple depths of the valley, gilding edges of buildings where it touches them, or lifting out masses of rock and yellow patches of sand.

An ocean, also, of variety, with sun-gleams rushing over, and lines of green, grey, and rich blue; a general dreamy feeling over it all of grey vapour, through which the eye penetrates to richest detail with a feeling of light and warmth. There are sails driving about like golden and bronze triangles, bearing the produce of the island—aloes, olives, and tamarinds. As yet Socotra is the most picturesque sight we have seen.

CHAPTER V

CEYLON

Colombo Harbour—Mount Lavina—Adam's Peak—Sketching under Difficulties—Gautama—Buddhist Procession—Road to Kandy—Mountain Scenery—Kandy Temples, &c.—Gardens of Peradina.

Feb. 24th.—After five days at sea we have dropped anchor at Colombo, where we may have a good spell ashore, and see what we can, while the coal-heavers have possession.

It is only at times that the chance occurs of seeing Adam's Peak from the sea; or, rather, the mirage of it. For five minutes before sunrise, under certain effects, this mirage can be observed, like a faint mist lying in the east, over sixty miles away, inland; and I was told to get up early, as the ship would enter the harbour about sunrise. I was almost late, but just caught it, and a fellow-passenger before me, trying to jot it down with colour—Adam's Peak as even the captain himself had seldom observed it before for distinctness.

I had intended only to draw it with pencil. As I had tumbled out of bed in a hurry, my painting materials were all down in my cabin, and I knew if I went for them that I

would be too late, for even as I looked it was beginning to fade.

I dotted down my sketch and colours, and darted over to see how the amateur was getting on, with my hands tingling to get at his colours to catch that flying scene of loveliness.

He had begun—as amateurs will do—to work with the ponderous method which he had been taught at school, as if it were a cottage he was imitating, instead of this marvellous gradation of gold, rose-gleams, and purple. I felt constrained to help him if I could, for no man used to painting could stand passive, and see a colour-box at his hand, with a sheet of paper, and a slow bungler making a mess of an effect which the Divine Mistress had spread out for our benefit, for us to take, once in a lifetime, if we could. In my heart I cursed his stupidity and lack of knowledge as I watched him, for one swift second stumbling about; then nature became too much for me, and with, ‘Excuse me,’ I snatched his brush out of his weak paw, and was splashing away at his sketch with one hand, while with the other I kept him back from his own property, uttering, as I painted, a long string of incoherent apologies for my rudeness.

‘Ah!’ I have caught it but just in time; the sun’s disc peeps over the right-hand ridge near the sea, where it slopes down, while the left-hand corner is nearly dissolved; but the sugar-loaf peak is all right.

‘Thanks!’ said I, handing back the brush, without noticing his just indignation; ‘that is the way to do it when you are in a hurry. No, don’t touch it; leave it till it dries. Ah! d—— it, man! why did you do that?’

I was too late to stop that methodical paw, as he very carefully took his sponge; then my effect was in an instant ruined and wiped clean off, and he was once again pottering away in his own school-board fashion, while I turned, with a groan, to try to reproduce from memory what the fool had not the gumption to keep when he had it.

I do not think this gentleman liked me afterwards, any more than I admired him.

The breakwater, with Fighthouse at the end, makes the subject of another sketch, as we steam up to and past it, to

our present position, white buildings with red tiles gleaming out from the morning haze, with fringes of palm and banana trees.

The harbour is crowded with catamarans, and little naked boys standing up, cracking their fingers to attract our attention, and offering to dive after annas—little Buddhists, with rich brown skins and shapely limbs, looking like girls, with their long, blue-black hair rolled up behind, and held together like chignons by tortoiseshell combs: lovely, gentle-faced boys, who look very innocent, yet are as full of cuteness as the American and Australian youth, for as one gets nearer the sun brains grow quicker, and, also, quickly decay.

Before going ashore we pass under the hands of the Cingalese tailor for a suit of pyjamas and thin day-clothes, which are promised to us next day.

We also change our English sovereigns into rupees, and some of us quickly melt these again into sapphires and rubies. In these transactions with the Colombo jewellers we find that, if there can be a degree of difference in guilt and duplicity drawn between the Brahmins, Mohamedans, and Buddhists, the followers of the Prophet carry the palm for dishonesty; the sons of Brahma come next, running a close race; while the disciples of Gautama are a shade better; although one must be a very close observer of human nature to draw the line of demarcation between them in rascality.

But they are all great believers in chance, with a wonderful trust in the honesty and credulity of the English: they are all quite ready for a game of toss-up, double or quits, when trading, and will give unlimited credit, trusting their gems for a simple I.O.U., without any other security, either to Australia or England, to be paid by order after the articles have been tested; and, as a rule, it is much safer to do business this way, ready cash being rewarded, in nine cases out of ten, by pieces of cut glass.

We get into a catamaran, and are paddled ashore, the clear, bright-green waters of the harbour teeming with life, and bathed in brilliant sunshine: steamships, catamarans of all sizes, from the primitive, outriggered logs which the

diving boys bestride, to the more complete, sailed fishing-craft and surf-boats, ferry-boats, and coal-barges crowded with natives, who swarm over everything, seeming, like summer flies, to breed in the heat spontaneously.

As we are paddled ashore, an anna pitched overboard will send one of the canoe-boys over the side in a twinkling, and before the coin has had time to sink many feet below the surface it is caught by him in his mouth, and up he pops triumphantly; holding it on high, and grabbing his floating paddle, he strikes out rapidly, and overtakes us, swift as we are being propelled. A fine row from the ship's side to the wooden wharf, where we are welcomed by hosts of brown skins and gay costumes—white, bright yellow, variegated stripes, orange, red, brown, purple, and blue, in different stages of freshness and faded tones—making a very rich effect and contrast with the tawny sand of the streets, white and time-stained walls, deep-green creepers, overhanging trees, and dazzling sunshine. The heat being excessive in the open, we are glad to seek the shadow sides of the way, and keep to them as long as possible.

A pleasant place to idle in is this 'pearl-drop' of India, and altogether novel to the English eye, with its temples and palm-groves, its cinnamon-gardens, and ever-changing groupings of gentle-faced natives. I thought myself an adept at telling the difference between male and female until I landed at Colombo; but now my ideas on the subject are vague and doubtful, for, like the lady who came here and took a maid, trusting to external appearance, I was for ever making mistakes, and vowing that the men were women; the only difference being that the men are more graceful and beautiful, having the least work to do, and dressing finer, while the women work in the fields, and look coarser.

Buddha, or Gautama Sakya Mouni, has always been one of my ideal heroes; his self-sacrifice and moralities I have studied, and tried to comprehend, as I do the later teachings of our own moral Founder. The Christian philosopher must sympathise with and venerate the true believer of the 'enlightened one.' But in Ceylon, like in our own country, the spirit is very sadly overclouded by the form,

while the ceremonies are of more importance, seemingly, than the creed; so that I was disappointed in my ideal by the temples and shrines which I saw, even while gratified in my art sense by the display. Such carvings and signs of antiquity everywhere; we see the records of more than twenty centuries, well preserved, at every turn.

As my visit was necessarily hasty, and my present object to get the voyage over, and once more renew old acquaintances in a newer world, I will not spend time now dwelling upon the creeds or historical objects of interest in this spicy island, but hurry over with the vague impressions of a couple of days spent in Colombo, the road to Mount Lavina, and from there to Kandy, the capital, where the sacred tooth of the philosopher of truth, loving-kindness, and self-abnegation, is enshrined under a golden bell, and smothered by precious stones. It does seem a grim mockery and reflection on the vanity of human aims and teachings, that the man who gave up a principedom and boundless wealth to preach and practise the preciousness of rags and poverty, should have the tooth which, I daresay, often troubled him sadly while alive, in spite of his philosophy, so buried and preserved amongst the gold and gems which he so properly despised.

We take with us, as attendant, a young, half-naked Buddhist boy, who by no means despises the vile pelf, and who, but for his own assurance, we could not credit to be a disciple of this faith. He is a sad little blackguard, and from time to time imparts to us little confidences which somehow tend to disillusionise us as to the effects of this true and noble creed. But he amuses us with his merry ways, and shirks everything like work.

We hire a 'gharri' to do the first part of our journey, after seeing what we can at Colombo, and drive along a beautiful road for the seven miles to Mount Lavina, through native villages and cocoanut groves, along roads of red-coloured sand, meeting at every turn splendid groups of pedestrians and native, bullock-driven waggons.

A velvety blue haze hangs over the groves of palms and bananas, stealing between the ivory-tinted trunks and

behind the layers of leaf-masses, sap-green and rich purple. As we pass the native houses, we see pictures at every revolution of the gharri's rusty wheel: the 'boutiques,' or stalls, where we see a wealth of colour in the form of fruit and vegetables, with metal pots and fancy ornaments hung up; shady places to sit in, and study natural history, as we observe many of the natives engaged in—the operated upon being very patient and sentimental-looking, and the operators delicate and active. They are a merciful lot, these Buddhists, and will not destroy life, however insignificant or annoying it may be to themselves or others; so that it is as well, perhaps, for the comfort of visitors, that the Brahmins and Mahomedans share the land with them.

Houses, thatched or tiled, and with walls of plastered mud, white- and yellow-washed over; lovely gardens to every cottage, with a roadway like the sanded walk of an immense garden or conservatory at home; open shops, with tables laden with pine-apples, pumpkins, melons, bananas, mangoes; &c.; walls clustered with lichens and gay, spreading flowers; trees with scarlet flowers mixing and lighting up the drooping, light green and grey fronds or juicy background of leaves; haze rising from the red dust and wood-smoke floating through the forests; Buddhist priests walking in meditation, and yellow-serge-wrapt, with their acolytes carrying over their bare heads the oiled umbrellas; Hindoos with their shaved heads and white robes; Malays, Arabs, Tamils and Moors, more or less nude; bullock-carts coming along with white awnings, and the driver perched behind the shafts, while the little, hunchbacked bullock trudges along with more spirit and independence than bullocks often do in harness.

A conservative place is Ceylon, and filled with castes; yet we do not find any quarrelling or dissension amongst them. They trade and walk side by side, save the 'Rodiyas,' whom all men despise.

On the grey walls and ivory trunks we see the chameleon and other lizards. We pause to watch one or two, and notice the gradual change as they dart from shadow to sunshine, so as to make themselves invisible: on the grey walls

they look grey, and on the ivory trunks of the palm-trees, stone-colour.

Talking of ivory, I am sorry to hear that the sacred tooth is only a piece of elephant's tusk after all. They say it is a large tooth, and no wonder; still, it is as good as the reality, and serves its purpose, as I fondly trust my white sapphires will when I once again reach home.

We descend from the gharri at Mount Lavina, and sit down to admire the lovely stretch of sea-coast before us; with the line of palm-trees and the rolling, emerald-green waves, which break white upon the rocks and sand, and over which the surf-boats, with their white sails and standing figures, are rushing. It is a mighty rolling-in to make on this warm, peaceful day; but the waves have a long stretch to do their running from before they reach that golden shore, with hardly a break until the final stop—so it is hardly to be wondered at if they come in foaming.

Palm-groves all the way along as far as we can see, both sides of us, whether we look towards Galle or Colombo, with delicious stretches of yellow sands, sienna-tinted paths through the lush-grass, and brightly-dressed figures making splashes of colour in the distance.

While we dot down our sketch, beside us squats, near the verandah of the hotel, a Hindoo juggler with his cobra and tree-trick, &c.; an old man near by is trying to induce us to look at his wares, while his own attention is diverted by the tricks being performed. The old peddler is a Christian, and will not cheat more than a Buddhist. Inside the verandah a Brahmin merchant is doing a thriving trade with brass-ware and silk shawls, &c.; he is a fat-faced, shaven-headed, unctuous-looking Hindoo, who rolls his brown eyes about the yellow whites, and cheats with the air of a parson. Some of our passengers are gathered round, and getting drawn in by his Oriental wiles; and I am glad that we are dealing with Nature, for she gives us her wares without charge, and to the extent of our own carrying powers.

As my companions are making more elaborate sketches than I have been, I leave them working, while with my little fellow I go into the village to study what I can

there. He has to do something this time ; or, at least, I try to give him an occupation, by handing over to his care my umbrella and sketching-stool ; and so we begin our tramp together.

He chatters on, and tells me many wonderful facts about Buddhism, which go far to prove that my little friend knows nothing about his own religion beyond the broad principles of abstaining from flesh-food and preserving life when he can. Buddhist boys do not go after birds' nests, or tear the wings from flies, as Christian children are *not discouraged* from doing.

We are joined by one or two of his boy friends as we go on. I ask him if they are his sisters, for I cannot think of them as boys. I take notice, quietly, that my friend has divided his little burden into separate pieces, and that each of his friends carries a piece, he himself bearing the smallest and lightest article, to wit, my sketching-stool leather seat-top.

The friends of John Silva (my boy's name) multiply rapidly as we progress, until we are quite a crowd when I pause to gather my property together and make my first sketch since leaving the hotel.

Two Buddhist priests pass, oblivious of all externals, clad in yellow, with black, glazed umbrellas. The village temple stands a little way off, almost hidden by the trees in front. Little John Silva and his friends tell me there are five dancing girls inside the temple, if I will come and see it. They speak in the whispering, confidential tone of a Pandarus, which takes from me all desire to have any more of my illusions of Buddhism shattered.

As I sit down to sketch, the villagers come out to watch me, and crowd rather too close to be comfortable, cocoanut-oil in mass, with the knowledge of their universal mercy, not being pleasant. They are affable, but strong-scented, and made restless by the company which their charity bids them entertain and not molest. They laugh heartily when I make a joke, and crush the closer upon me, so that soon I cannot see my landscape for the brown barricade of bodies all round me ; then I feel that I must shift to higher ground if I would get my task accomplished.

My Jewish friends pass by in their gharri, with loud

cheers, which the natives about me return: I have only time to wave my hand to them as they disappear in a rolling cloud of fawn-coloured dust; but they tell me afterwards that I look a comic sight in the midst of my three hundred admirers.

Seeing a wall near me where I can get above the heads of the crowd, I transfer my position to there, determined to make the most of my time while the light lasts. Already the air seems to be laden with golden particles, and the mellow rays are shooting between the trunks, and touching objects with detached patches, while the shadows are large and sombre, as I take my seat on the wall, with my legs dangling over a sea of dark faces, looking up solemn and open-mouthed, except when John Silva makes some funny remark.

It is working under difficulties at the best, and before long I discover that I have made a bad change; for I have taken my seat near to the entrance of an ants'-nest, from which the alarmed colony emerge to resent my intrusion on their domain. I can see the advance of the enemy, and from of old know which must conquer at a close engagement; so I point them out, and ask permission to kill.

'No! No,' vehemently, from the crowd below, to my brutal request; and I find, if I want popularity, I must be merciful and resign my ground, or become a victim. I therefore take a middle course, and with my handkerchief gently sweep the myriads, as they rush from their holes, down amongst the gaping multitude; after which I can work in peace, while my admirers leap about in agony from stinging bites. Ants are difficult to shake off once they get a sure lodgment.

Night is coming on with very rapid strides before I get my work done, and mingle with the villagers, now joined by the field-workers and night visitors (I can tell which are the women now, with their sturdy working-limbs and firm, protruding breasts), and walk slowly towards Colombo, looking anxiously behind for my friends with the gharri.

I am the more concerned as, now that the darkness is creeping on, the rabble are getting rougher in their treatment of me, pressing closer, with boisterous demon-

stration, and pushing me with loud demands for money. John Silva artfully tells me that I must give them money; or they may kill me now they have me alone; but although I do not believe the boy, or yield to their demands, it is with a feeling of relief that I hear the sound of rolling wheels; and shortly afterwards see my friends and the welcome gharri rush through the centre of a dust-cloud, through the parting masses, and pick me up, amidst wild howls and loud bursts of jeering laughter.

An interesting drive back to Colombo, through streets in twilight, past the lighted shops and bronze lamps, with mysterious figures gliding along in the obscurity.

We are met by a Buddhist procession—boys and men dancing along, with lanterns, torches, and fantastic costumes (some have grotesque masks on, and others are painted), playing on instruments of brass and beating drums. It is a Church festival they are celebrating with droll antics. Our gharri-driver tells us that this is the snake season, and night is the time when Ceylon snakes come out mostly; also about one very dangerous species, fierce and deadly, which is said to haunt the roadways, attacking passengers and chasing them. We look on the unconcerned crowds that perambulate the roads on foot, and do not believe him, yet feel a slight shrinking sensation when our hand comes accidentally against the iron bars of the gharri, and keep a sharp lookout for dark, ribbon-like objects about the sand; but we do not see any during our drive.

The after-glow is dyeing the western space with waves of gold, ruby, and sapphire, as we drive past the lake near Colombo—a wealth of rich colour, which is repeated in the smooth water along with the reflections from the masses of tropical foliage along the banks; then, as it fades out to a green pallor, the moon above shines out, and lights the sides of walls and clear portions of the streets with silver lustre, leaving black mysteries of shadow where not broken up by the richly-coloured lanterns and orange lights from the bronze lamps in the native shops and stalls.

We dine at the Grand Oriental, and meet many of our friends, some of whom have returned from Kandy with glowing accounts of the magnificent mountain scenery *en route*

making us resolve, if we can manage it, to visit that City of the Kings. Fortunately for us, the captain, coming ashore for a few moments, informs us that he will not sail before Friday midday; so that we determine to risk it to-morrow morning.

A rare mingling of nationalities there is in this vast dining-room : passengers from the different vessels in harbour ; gentlemen from up-country, Cingalese and Portuguese, Dutch, French, Germans, Indians, Japanese, Russians ; with the coffee-planters, and coffee-coloured attendants gliding about like priests of Egyptian temples, and, overhead, the capacious awnings being swung by punkah-boys.

A gorgeous dining-room, with glittering tables, lighted up by numerous silver candelabra, and glass-ware, and decorated with huge clusters of fruit and flowers ; while along with the buzz of conversation in different languages blend the monodrone of clouds of mosquitoes.

But the dinner is not equal to the display—badly cooked, and most unsatisfying after the ‘ Parramatta ’ bill of fare ; and the charges are exorbitant, both for meat and drink.

For a John Collins—a drink largely patronised here—they charge a rupee. The cigars are abominable, and there is no abatement in price ; but the waiters are most polite and servile, even while they remain firm to the principles of the island.

They export tea largely now, which seems likely to supersede coffee ; but although I heard much in England of the excellency of Ceylon tea, I could not get a cup of it here. They drink the Chinese brew, and import what they use themselves.

Some of the male passengers went out in the evening to see the Nautch girls dancing, while others interviewed Arabi Pasha ; but not being interested either in the Eastern dancers or the Egyptian leader, who is winding up his adventurous career, like Buffalo Bill, as a showman, we preferred to pass the evening amongst the trading-stalls and moonlit streets until bedtime.

Feb. 25th.—After a night of lively revival of old times with the mosquitoes, and a better breakfast than we had

dinner last night, we caught the early-morning train to Kandy.

My boy, John Silva, seemingly awake all night, met us at the hotel-door, and ran after us, along the misty streets, to the station. He was disappointed that we left such a useful person as he behind, and told us he could not think how we would be able to see the place without him; however, we said that we would try to manage, for that day at least, and got on all right, in spite of his friendly warning that they were great rogues at Kandy.

On past the lake we went at a mild pace, seeing the bullocks wading about up to the neck, and munching at the reeds which overran the surface; along by the side of swamps where men and women seemed to be fishing, also up nearly to the neck; past pineapple gardens and paddy terraces, through groves of banana and cotton trees, and waste places where the grasses grew rank, and fell about, uncut, on all sides, like rain-beaten, unripe cornfields—places where the cobra and python might lie concealed, and breed with safety, or the cheetah wait for sundown; seeing cottages, and cottagers with their large families, at every turn of our winding way; stopping at stations prettily decorated with flowers, where men and boys came to vend their rice-cakes and sweetmeats—stations with long, sounding titles, such as Maradana, Henaratgodo, Veyangodo, Ambipussa, Polgahawela, Rambukkana, and Kadugannawa; past the Kalanya River, with its margin of reeds and lilies; along between hedgerows of convolvulus, and flowers yellow, white, blue, and red; along the flats, mist-covered—the cream-tinted mist which hangs over tropical swamps, carries malaria, and is the sign of a broiling day.

The railway-carriages are pretty comfortable, and run smoothly; the fires of the engine are fed with wood logs, the fumes from which smell nicer than our coal-fumes when passing through mountain cuttings, and in long tunnels.

After a time we leave the plains, and begin our stiff ascent over and through the hills.

Then I did not regret that I had made up my mind to see Kandy, or feel the train going too slow, for I wished we

could crawl along those ridges which we were surmounting, or could divide myself, so as to look out both sides of the carriage at once, as the magnificent scenery burst from the mists rolling upwards from the valleys.

Every mile we were going higher; no going down to rise again, or along flat levels. From the first ascent, right on to Kandy, it is a steep rise, up which the engines snort and struggle; with the occasional rest at wayside stations, the air getting colder and the distance clearer as we advance.

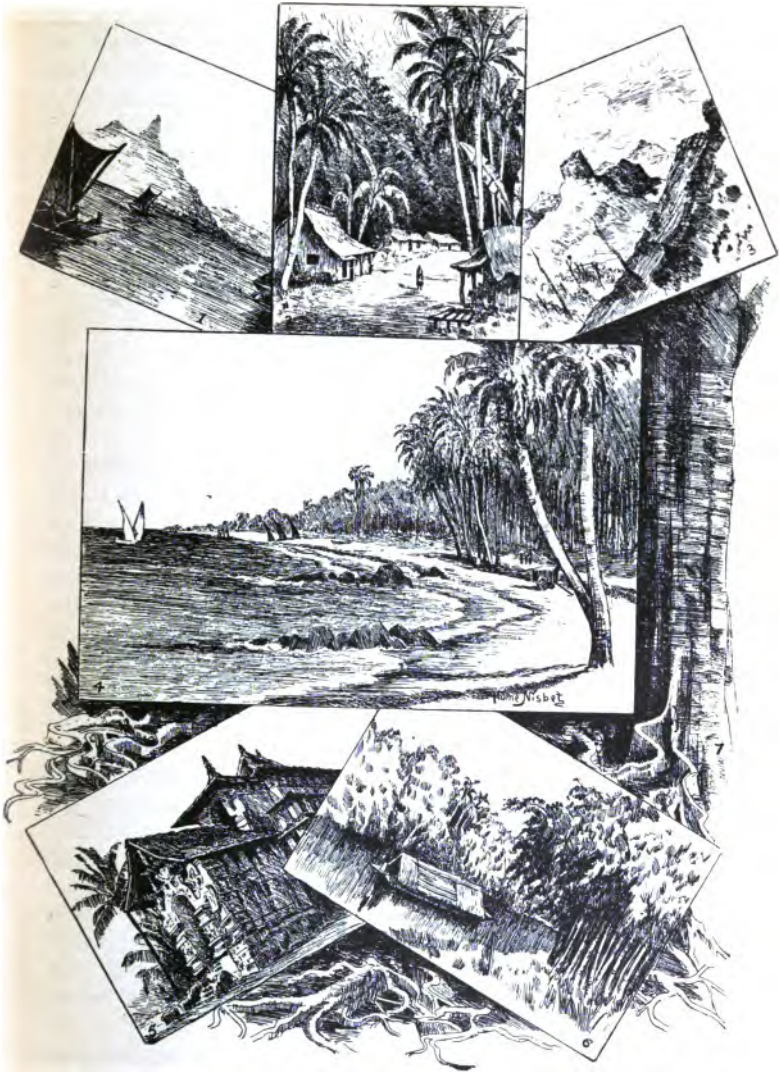
Past coffee and tea plantations, with the plants growing on the steep hillsides; rice ridges placed, layer above layer, up the mountains, filled with water, and overflowing with constantly-running streams, through which the saturated rice-reeds were beginning to appear; terraces with moats dug out to catch the rains, and mountain torrents; glistening ridges, fringed with bright, sprouting green.

Precipices over which waterfalls plunge, and gullies half-hidden with tropical foliage and flowers; with long stretches of cultivated valleys, flanked by mighty boulders, and terminating in rugged, far-distant, blue mountains, about which the mists wreathed and dissolved, making every moment changes of form.

A train journey, to enjoy which I had rather have missed my passage than foregone, now that I knew what it was. I never saw more stupendous rocks, or such a variety of effects in the time—rocks like castles perched on green hill-tops, or starting out of the sides of valleys in strange forms and abruptness. The colouring, also, could not be surpassed, or the marvellous changes which the sun-pierced vapours produced.

We arrive at Kandy all too quickly, even although the treat of variety and grandeur will be repeated on our return journey: we have also seen the real Adam's Peak, as we saw the mirage yesterday; although, with the morbid taste of my kind, I prefer the sham to the reality.

It is at Kandy that one begins to forget Europe for the first time, with that forty miles of mountain between us and the sea, even in spite of the few British soldiers whom one meets occasionally about the streets.



CEYLON

We have been rising over and through mountains for the past four hours, but the line still continues to rise and cut after leaving Kandy, with scenery getting grander and wilder for many a mile further; but we have reached the heart of the island, and our hours are limited, so we must rest content with what we can see, and carry from here, the principal place in Ceylon.

We are in a city of antiquity, temples, and palaces, historically twenty-four hundred and twenty-nine years old, since it was conquered by Wijago from the ancient owners, the 'veddahs,' who now inhabit the woods, untamable.

We have no time to pause for tiffin at the hotel, but rush off to view the Eastern streets and see the ancient temple, or Dagoba, the 'Dalada' or 'Maligawa,' which stands at the top of Colombo Street, and was reared for the repose of that sacred 'tooth' which has now been replaced by the bit of elephant-ivory.

Maligawa, the temple, stands near the banks of the miniature lake which the ancient kings created to beautify their chosen capital. No pains have been spared to embellish the time-worn stones of this venerable building: a balustrade surrounds it, richly carved, and embossed with relief-work, while even the steps and flagstones are cut into rich scrolls; indeed, it is so much covered with ornament that the eye is apt to lose its beauty and significance in its multiplicity.

Inside, the vestibules and corridors have the same scroll and embossed work everywhere—on the ceilings, floors, walls, pillars, and doors. Where the Dalada is at the altar one sees a gigantic figure of the squatting Buddha, with hands laid over the upturned soles of the feet, and with palms open and flat. He is surrounded by symbols of the Virtues, while two upright figures support him; and behind are kept the seven locked covers of the Dalada, each key kept by a different priest, who is held responsible for the safety of his own bejewelled cover. The relic is inside the innermost cover or casket.

There are flowers upon the altar, and leaves from the bo-tree, or pippul—the still-flourishing stump of which stands in the courtyard—planted some time during the reign

of King Devinipiatissa, two thousand years ago. I got one of the relics from this ancient tree.

There is much of interest to be seen in the old streets of Kandy: the Palace of the Kings, the Library, and other temples and places of worship devoted to Buddha, Brahma, and Mahomet; the Lake, with its pillars and posts of carved stone; stalls where precious stones, carved silver and brass work, mats, illuminated scrolls, chatties, and other articles of ornament or utility, are on view. We glance at all this as we pass, and at the jewellers and other workers carving their wares in the sight of all who like to look, with the mixed crowd of coloured races moving about or standing in groups; then we walk off to finish the daylight in the most famous gardens of the world—Peradenia.

Botanic public gardens are much alike all over the world—straight or winding walks, nicely trimmed and carefully kept—so that it is only to those botanically inclined that the separate interest lies; but when the traveller once takes his fill of the gardens of Peradenia, all other public gardens seem to be weak imitations.

There is nothing under cover here, but all free to the air and sun—ebony, satinwood, calamanchi, cinnamon, betel, bamboo giant trees; the banyan, and india-rubber with its milky juice oozing out wherever pricked; flower-bearing trees and sugar-canes; the bo-tree in its young state, the areca-nut and talipot palm; gorgeous-plumaged birds of great variety; butterflies, like birds, of every hue; and, in the long-grass thickets, the large and small snakes with which the island is infested.

It is night when we get back; and what a night!—golden stars above and glittering fireflies below, seen in full perfection before the moon rises: such a night-walk as one who has never been out of England could not realise, no matter how vividly described.

After dinner we are lured into the native shops, more by the romantic, Arabian-Nights-like appearance of them than from any desire to purchase; yet we are drawn on to buy, whether we will or not.

Most of our purchases are made by the game of guess—one rupee against ten for moonstone brooches, cheetah-skins,

butterflies in boxes, chased daggers, and images of Buddha or Brahma carved in brass.

We hold the coin in our hands, and the dealer guesses heads or tails ; if he is correct in his guess, we lose our ten rupees ; if wrong, we get the article for one.

Whether he wins or loses he is courteous and composed, being Eastern ; when we win we chuckle, when we lose we get excited and blaspheme, being Western.

I begin to notice, after one or two trials, that I win oftener with the believers in Brahma than I do with the followers of Buddha ; also, that before the latter ventures upon a guess he always rests his hand lightly over mine. He does not care to venture a guess unless he does this ; and when I insist upon hands off, he nearly always loses—that is, in the case of touching, the game is reduced to a certainty on his side, while in the other case it is clearly chance, and nothing more.

This interests me psychologically more than the articles won or lost, and I begin to wonder if my Oriental is a thought-reader ; for, of course, I know which side is uppermost in my closed hand.

It is a quaint scene, this little lamp-lighted Eastern shop, with its picturesque wares ranged out, the eager, dark faces of the onlookers, and we pale-faces, in our white clothes and pith helmets, playing the game of hazard with those tawny shopkeepers.

And when we retire that night, after counting what we have spent, and overlooking our purchases, we do not consider that we have been much cheated by the natives of Kandy.

CHAPTER VI

AT SEA

The Doldrums—Incidents on Board—Cape Leeuwin—First Sight of Australia.

Feb. 28th.—Crossed the Line last night, and are now passing through the doldrums. Weather hot, moist, and

uncomfortable, and rain pouring constantly, as it nearly always does in this quarter of the globe.

We have been hitherto, without exception, a pleasant company on board—that is, we were up to leaving Suez—and, what is unusual on board ship during a long voyage, without a single case of discord or bickering. But in the long space of time before us, until we sight land after leaving Colombo, it is hardly to be expected that this genial feeling can keep up; livers get out of order with the want of proper exercise, and the lavish fare which the P. and O. Company provide: also, as I have observed, the passengers booking at London get into such a confidential condition with one another, that they are apt to look upon later arrivals as intruders within their home-circles, so that one is inclined to pity the late-comers.

At Suez the first break occurs, and, also, the first batch of strangers join us; people departing whose absence leaves a singular blank considering our short intimacy, and others taking their place who do not seem to be able to fill up the void left.

I have already said how much I enjoy the society of Australians when travelling; and, with very few exceptions, our Suez additions are all Australians going home—some half-dozen. This party I can fairly divide into the class whom I get on with, and the exceptions to the broad rule of pleasant company; and as they both operated a little on my immediate future, I may as well linger for a short time to speak about them while in this limp latitude, which in old days, before condensing machines, used to be looked forward to for the replenishing of the sailors' casks.

A young Jewish lady going home to be married belongs to the Suez additions; a native of Sydney, who becomes a universal favourite before we are well into the Red Sea, and is straightway admitted to the inner circle, with her free and merry ways.

An Australian squatter going out to look after his stations. He is a Scotchman by birth, a keen reader of character, and educated highly—a man not easily imposed upon, as any one might see by his bright blue eyes. I con-

gratulate myself that he takes to me after a night's tussle of argument in the smoke-room, and becomes my friend for the rest of the voyage.

The third is a member of the Treasury of Victoria, quiet in manner, and seemingly apathetic; yet, under his stolid manner of receiving people and remarks lurks a vast amount of native wit and astute appreciation of humour. We also become great friends, and afterwards I am much indebted to him for information and aid in my colonial work. Both gentlemen bear out fully the Australian character for warm-heartedness and hospitality.

The exceptions come next, and I am sorry to write anything which may appear disparaging about them for three good reasons:—

Firstly, I had made up my mind beforehand, from memories of the past, to receive nothing but hearty welcome and encouragement from the makers of the Colonies.

Secondly, they belong to that sex which we generally like to think of as ladies.

Thirdly, they were all natives of that portion of the land where some of my happiest days have been passed, and which my heart warms to as it does to my own birth-place—to wit, Victoria.

But, after all, what is the use of heeding three bad potatoes out of a cartload of good ones?

A mother and her two daughters travelling homeward after doing the Grand Tour.

Through the interposition of my bad familiar spirit, it so chanced that this evil-disposed party of three were placed opposite to me at meal-times; so that it was not possible for me to get out of their reach, had I been inclined, without making a talk on board, which I did not choose to do, as I have hitherto fancied I could agree with any one—unless, of course, I was tied to them for life.

How the one-sided feud began I never could understand, much as I have tried. The first look I had of them was of a pert, beady-black-eyed, thin-lipped young female, the incarnation of undeveloped bad temper, with a mother who had developed her faculties in that direction, and who bore a striking resemblance to her daughter, only that her

black hair was plastered down each side of her forehead as we are apt to see caricatures of revivalist saints; and on the other side a diminutive figure with the affectations of a girl, a wearied air when in repose, and a general dryness, which suggested to some of the frivolous young men on board the title of 'Bombay Duck,' which they afterwards used when speaking about her in the smoke-room.

We were not very many hours inflicted with their company before we heard that they had been presented to Her Majesty while in England—an unexpected honour, which, apparently, had completely upset their weak little heads.

What with their arrogance, affectation of fine airs and superiority, and little traits of malignant spite, a couple of days sufficed to put them into Coventry by the disgusted passengers, who united in snubbing them as they properly deserved, and as all bad-tempered pretenders ought to be treated.

All excepting myself—for from the first I yielded to my instincts, and kept from interfering with them in any way; therefore, for this, I suppose, I was rewarded by their united and special hatred and open insults.

How little we know, when walking along a street, self-absorbed, how busy we may be making mortal enemies all round. My friend from whom I so rudely snatched the brush at Colombo had a reason to dislike me; therefore I could not blame him if he did so. But with these fair daughters of sunny Austral, whom I was ever ready to endure for the sake of their country, and whose land I was going now on a love-mission to, it was altogether different: they owed me kindness and courtesy, if they owed me anything.

The mother, I think, had got over her vivacity of insolence and vulgarity, and toned down with age only to malignity. But the youngest daughter was sprightly to the extreme, and pitched her bombshells about without much regard to aim; so that I, being directly opposite to her seat, came in for most of the worst-aimed ones, the little, elder sister simpering foolishly, or looking wearied and dried up, during those passages in which her lively and ladylike sister distinguished herself.

How often have I sighed, and wished audibly for some

male appendage to that Court-presented party when this maiden became extra aggressive, while I was forced by manhood to appear quiet, and smile as if I did not comprehend her. She must have thought me a very stolid and thick-skinned person from the manner of her compliments.

I am indebted to her for teaching me to smile and look composed under any circumstances when it is not in one's power to resent the affront. I smiled through all the faults which she found with my style of eating walnuts without salt, strawberries with pepper, ham with jelly, and my personal habits of attiring myself, with the hundred-and-one feminine ways she took of proving to all the ship's company that I was not a person to her taste, and made no rejoinder whatever, so that I think now I am qualified to smile at any mortal insult delivered by the weaker sex.

'Why do you always wish that my brother was on board?' this young person asked me one day on deck; at which question the other passengers laughed, as if she had made, for the first time, a genial joke.

'Because I would like to meet him,' I replied, gravely, shifting my position so as to get away from the siren.

On another occasion, in the music-saloon while I was speaking to a young Australian lady about some friends of mine who lived in the Colonies, this delightful specimen of refinement broke in upon our conversation (I did not know of her vicinity, so that the interruption was unexpected) by asking me, in a very loud voice, intended to be offensive:—

'Pray, what relationship are those people to you?'

I regarded her for a moment, and then decided that it was my duty to her sex, if not to her, to reply.

'No direct blood relatives of mine, Miss ——; but they are connections, for all that.'

'Ah! I thought they could be no relatives of yours, as they are my friends!'

'Indeed!' I remarked, slowly, as this thunderbolt fell on all the astonished ears. Then, turning to the sister and mother, I said: 'You have great cause to be proud of your sister, madam; and you of your daughter;' and, bowing to them both, I left the saloon, to compose myself with a smoke.

I would not have mentioned these trifling incidents of a sea voyage, except to show that it is not all dulness, even in the doldrums; or elevated such insignificant personages by taking notice of them more than I have done of the agreeable incidents of the voyages, only that their reasonless animosity did not terminate on board ship, but followed me up, with the settled resolution of a nobler purpose, through the Colonies, where I heard of their sentiments and calumnies as I progressed, and even over the ocean again to old England, where one might have supposed that the rankest rancour might have lost its sting. Remarks which they made on board to other passengers, with criticisms on my abilities, which they had no opportunity of knowing, which echoed back to me, and over which I only laughed, they reduced to writing to friends in the colonies and to my employers at home. But, as I said before, three rotten potatoes in a cartload are nothing, and one can well put up with three enemies, even although they are females, when they have won a thousand friends.

Between the showers the cloud-effects are very beautiful in this region of perpetual rain (I have often wondered what it is on shore in these latitudes—the wet skies which border the blazing Line). We see bulging, purple-shaded cumulus clouds piled up, one weighing down another, like heavy snow avalanches, with green intersections, or, it may be, rainbows gilding up the dark sides, while over the water lies a white sheen.

In the morning we have a dawn-effect of Indian yellow and white, with purple clouds, the surface of the ocean oily, and in long, heaving swellings, taking on broad, decided, square, prismatic touches of yellow, green, red, blue, and silver-white, with the dark masses of cloud-sides dripping straight with long reflections down the waves.

At sunset the thundery masses gather blacker and more densely, with a fierce orange sun in a broken confusion of dun and crimson; while against the sun, in the eastern quarter, are to be seen motionless forms of chubby cherubs lying on eider-down pillows, dyed of a rosy hue, with purple sides against a bright, green background; motionless clouds which take on an after-brightness without a seeming cause,

growing strangely brilliant and ghastly white as daylight fades from the sky behind them—a dead calm without a breath of air about, and swelteringly hot, like a vapour-bath.

March 8th.—Between reading hard and overlooking sketches, also vainly trying to develop some photographic plates, which the heat of the tropics spoil, the days have been got rid of in the Indian Ocean, and we are looking forward to sight the land to-morrow.

I feel, as I always do before beginning a new work, most horribly depressed and uncertain. On the map Australasia appears so little to get over; but I have been there before, and know well the difficulties of the ground: and the time I have committed myself to do it in—fifty sketches ready for the engraver per month, along with my extra MS. (so many pages of descriptive matter to go along with the sketches), the journeys, picking up information, purchasing photos, besides taking them, and arranging other matters—it appears a fearsome task I have undertaken in these short nine months the nearer I approach to those 3,030,771 square miles out of the nine months' burden of 3,169,389 square miles. However, I must just brace up for it, and squeeze as much juice from the speeding months as mortal man can. Farewell to sleep and calm repose after to-day, until I can cry 'It is finished!'

March 9th.—Sighted Cape Leeuwin at twelve o'clock. A splendid day, with sunny clouds over a cerulean sky, and deep, blue-green, white crested waves dancing past; breezy, and just cool enough to be bracing.

Cape Leeuwin, low-lying and hazy, the first point of Western Australia! On the taffrail we all lean and watch it, my friend Ida, the Jewish bride-elect, talking very fast to keep back the moisture which will come to her grey eyes (she was not long before she had to borrow my handkerchief, her own not being handy, to wipe up those rebel tears). Even the beady-black eyes of my enemy seemed to twinkle and snap with a kind of emotion which softened me greatly towards her as she sees her native land loom up in the far-off distance, with the tiny puffs of white vapour here and there which denote bush-fires, and which at night sparkle out over the waters like friendly beacons.

What all were feeling who claimed this land as their birthright, I also felt as I look with strange yearning and melancholy thrillings towards it. We have passed through storms and threatening skies as if safely at home looking out of a window; witnessed startling phenomena of cloud-forms and wave-shapes, waterspouts boiling and curling upwards to meet the down-reaching clouds, clouds stretching down spiral feelers to touch the whirling waves; sun-rises soft and rosy-like with the fresh clearness of little children, sunsets grand and gloomy, like spent, gorgeously-apparelled armies—and now they will soon be things of the past, like the friendships which end with the journey, and the pitiful hatreds which live too long.

Australia the mighty, land of the free, where a man may lift up his head and date time from his own exertions; where the right hand of labour grants a nobler patent of nobility than ever did the bloody sword of usurpation and wrong in olden days; where that southern constellation, the Cross, looks down upon a greater Crusade than ever knight made his vows to—the grand crusade of brotherhood and independence! Australia, the young giant who advances with such mighty strides before all the decaying nations of the time-worn world—I look toward you, and all the blood in me tingles to begin my work.

CHAPTER VII

ALBANY

Albany and King George Sound—A Boorish Reception—Qualifications of a Settler—Secret of Colonial Success—Incidents in the Early Life of a Squatter.

I HAVE, in the voyage out, kept a regular account of the points of interest day by day, for the direct purpose of letting readers who may follow my footsteps know exactly when to look out for the places; but there is no necessity of doing so any longer, as it is a matter of choice, or convenience, how he may continue the rest of his journeyings—that is, after he

shakes himself free of the punctuality of the mail steamships: therefore I drop the diary form with relief to myself, and, I doubt not, with equal pleasure to the reader, and after this will go on, stop, turn aside or back, as I feel inclined, without regard to time.

A balmy morning when we steam through King George Sound, and drop anchor inside the Princess Royal Harbour, with the pretty town of Albany lying in front of us, upon the shores of as lovely a bay as one could wish to look at.

During the night we have been passing Flinders Bay, Black Point, Donelly, Warren, and Bowles rivers, Point d'Entrecasteaux, with Mount Mitchell and the Bennet Ranges, the shores lighted up here and there with bush-fires, and by daybreak have sighted Break-sea Island and lighthouse at the entrance to the sound; fine bold headlands on all sides of us, Baldhead Point, with parts bare, brown, and sterile-looking, showing out in strong relief amongst the local colouring of olive-green scrub, yellow-tinted rocks, white sandhills, and green and purple waters.

There is a striking resemblance to the Bay of Naples in this port of Albany, even although the houses are startlingly colonial; it is in the general arrangement of buildings and contour of the land that the idea takes hold of us of having seen it all before: an Antipodean Naples, which is cleaner, and which fulfils more sanitary laws, while having surroundings which satisfy the artistic sense as completely, waters as sunny, sands whiter, roadways warmer-tinted, and a general air of repose and peace which catches the mind, and gives to it the desire to go no farther, but settle down at once, and begin to plant our vines.

Not a passenger stays aboard, for we are all eager to touch this land; a small steam-launch waits alongside to take passengers, while another is under way from the wharf to bear off all that this one cannot carry.

The boatmen have none of the obsequiousness of the boatmen of other ports which we have touched at on our journey; they are colonial and independent, and name their price with a gruff take-it-or-leave-it manner. One tall, young, sun-dried importation, whose duty it is to help with the ropes and gangways, plants himself in the direct way of everyone, and will

not budge from his post to oblige the passengers coming down the ladder ; they must go round him, and take awkward leaps to get to the deck, while he lowers upon them a sullen eye. At a glance one can see that he has only been a year or two in the land of the free—just long enough to get the fat melted from his bones, and not long enough to get used to his surroundings.

He is trying hard to get rid of his country boorishness and home-bred discontent and servility, but he still remembers the rinds of bacon which he has been used to chew, and his fathers before him ; he can hardly resist hanging his loutish head and touching his hat to the quality, and in his efforts to resist the engrained habits of centuries he runs into the opposite extreme, and behaves himself like the freckle-faced, pig-headed, unlicked cub that he is.

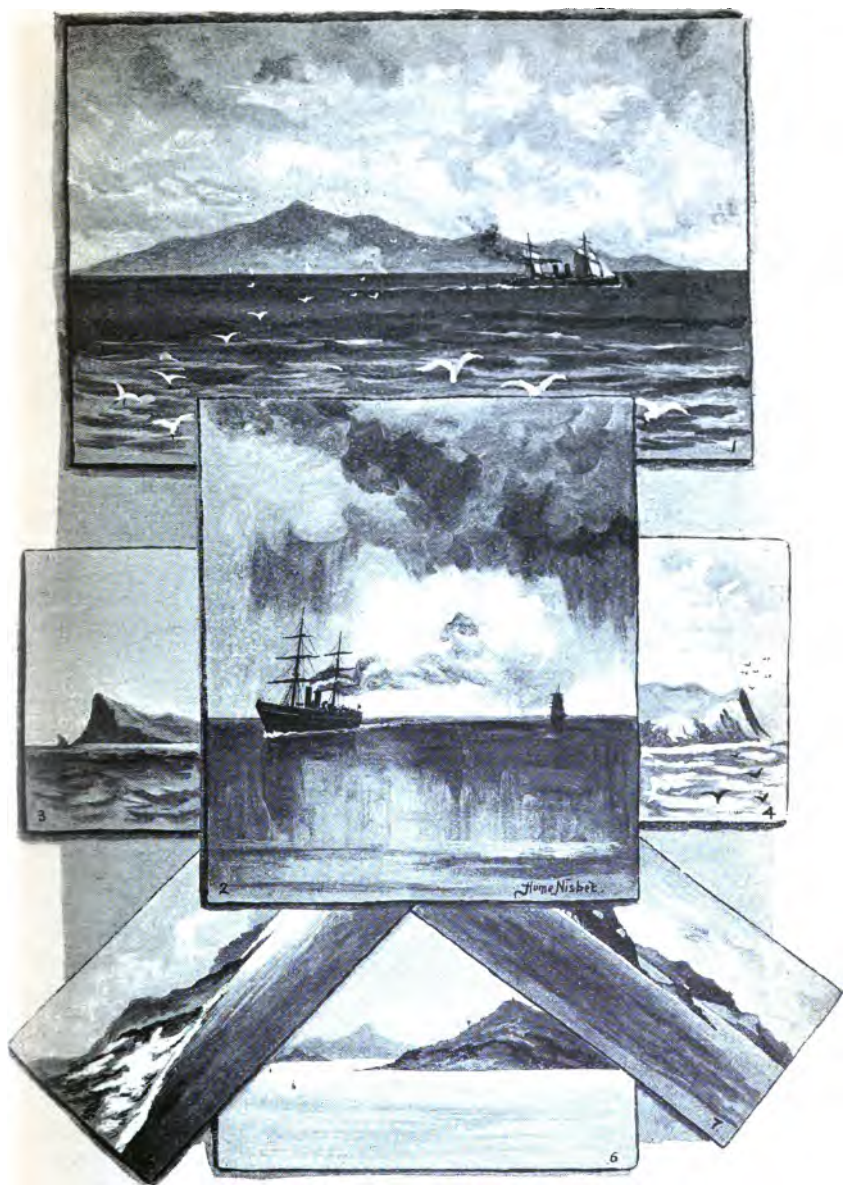
The engineer and fireman are both old hands, and look bright, bluff and cheery as they bustle about. I feel aggressive as I look at this gaunt young man, soothed again as I turn towards them.

Two of the ladies coming down have had narrow escapes of falling into the sun-lighted waves in their efforts to get past this dogged representative of the half-colonised John Bull, who neither will move aside nor proffer a hand. I am a little behind the ladies, and one of the gentlemen who spring forward and save them from the ducking. There is only one way of treating him that he can understand, and that is to jerk him aside.

I therefore put my shoulder to the task, and land him against the gunwale without protest or apology ; independence is what he aims at, and this is the only way in which he can understand it : the best bully to the centre of the walk. When he picks himself out of the coil of rope over which he has stumbled he glares for a moment, as if he intends to fight, but seemingly thinks upon a better method of revenge, for he only growls out a purely Saxon oath, and stands aside, with the rope-end in his dirty paws.

It is a side glance which warns me of his intentions, and former experience of his village-kind, so I wait with patience for what I expect to come.

We are all aboard, and puffing away, Mount Possession



WESTERN AUSTRALIA, ETC.



in front overlying the pretty township, and a delicious sky overhead ; I take out my sketch-book to make some rapid pencil-notes of the wharf, &c., towards which we are veering.

‘Look out what you are doing, lout!’ cries my companion, the New South Wales advocate, as we near the shore.

The young man had carelessly thrown over me a coil of the rope which he meant to throw ashore, and it was now lying about my legs.

‘Don’t bother,’ said I ; ‘I’ll be all right. I say, my fine fellow, are you a good swimmer?’

‘No!’ growls out the sulky boatman ; ‘I never tried.’

‘Then I’m afraid you’ll have to try in another moment, if you don’t take that rope from my legs at once.’

‘Get out of the way then!’ he snarls.

‘Don’t hurry,’ I remark, putting up my book ; ‘only, if you attempt to throw that rope, over you go.’

I gripped him firmly with both hands, ready for the fling, when the ex-chawbacon thought better of it. With the humility of former days, he uncoiled the pretty trap he had prepared, and went about his duty with a better style.

I never met a boy or man who had been ten years in the colony behave like this ; but it takes nearly eight years to lick a true-born, country-bred, pork-fed new chum into proper colonial shape.

It was a fortunate thing that the purely Saxon element on board the ‘Parramatta’ was decidedly in the minority on that voyage out ; those few we had all grown friendly with (with the exception of that one Court-presented family), and were able to enjoy and shorten the days at sea. There was much laughing and talking amongst us as we went along the wharf, through the streets, and up the sides of Mount Possession, the only point of interest to visitors for the short time at their disposal.

A hot day, even for Western Australia, yet so pure and lung-inspiring an atmosphere that the stiff climb hardly affected the most delicate of our party.

Halfway up we paused to look at the long champaign which spread before us towards Perth. We could see the coach-road, like a ruddy line, until it became lost in extreme

distance: a spreading country, in colour and tone resembling the stretches of Surrey—salt marshes, mostly dried, with here and there a silver glitter of water, and, beyond, a fine range of hazy, blue mountains, lying across the horizon.

Another stiff climb over rocks, and through bushes of eucalyptus, and we reach the top, and can rest, and feast our eyes upon the magnificent panorama that lies beneath us—a panorama of water, sands, islands, and headlands which could not be surpassed, and only rarely equalled: King George Sound and the ocean beyond, to the south-west; that long spread of fen-land, with the bush-fires, to the north-east; and the township and sparkling bay to the south.

The water is intensely blue, save where the shallow parts make it green, like an emerald fringe against the dazzling, snow-white sands; nowhere else have I ever seen sands so exceedingly white. The near islands and headlands are olive-green, with interspaces of yellow sandstone, grey quartz, and russet-tinted, deposited rocks; while the more distant lands swim in vapour-like, velvety folds.

Western Australia has had, hitherto, rather a languishing existence, and owes what bounds towards prosperity it has made to the convict importations in the first instance, afterwards to the gold-fields, and at present to the yearly increasing value of its pearl-oyster beds; but it has a great future before it as the future sanatorium of different parts of the world. Invalids from India can here recruit; it is also handy for England and many other parts. The climate is perfect, and the health-conditions all which could be desired; while, as far as its agricultural and pastoral qualities are concerned, no other part, excepting, perhaps, the western districts of Victoria, can equal it throughout the entire continent.

In extent it is eighty times larger than Great Britain—*i.e.*, in English square miles, 1,060,000, or 678,400,000 acres. Where the soil is good it can grow anything, and in great abundance, in the shape of grain, fruit, and vegetables; it is, in fact, like the land which Moses led the Children of Israel within sight of, and saw only himself, a land of plenty waiting upon the possessors.

A country for a man who longs for a calm, passionless

existence to go and rest in after he has clutched enough from the world to permit him to let it go; the El Dorado of the fever-wearied, where echoes from Pall Mall will not come too quickly to disturb repose; where a man who has a moderate competence may retire, and become a philosopher without being a cynic, if he has only money enough to buy muscles and sinews. Land can be bought by any one here. Then he may come here and dream a dream of perfect peace, with the vines and orchards and crops springing up about him, with the health-giving air bringing a second youth, while the years roll back, and comfort comes by insensible but rapid strides.

The land, also, for the strong man with the young family, who is not above taking up his load and struggling patiently—that is, who can be content to sell his sinews and years for the other man's gold; but both must combine, and work together—the small capitalist and the stalwart labourer. It only keeps a new country back if labour comes alone; and gold-seeking and pearl-diving are not sufficient.

Let the emigrant who has money have enough to be able to lay out without returns for ten years, and the emigrant who has none have the patience and perseverance of Jacob, and both will die wealthy men. Nature everywhere is a stern mistress to woo, whether to the painter, the poet, or the colonist. The first years will be years of disappointment to all—hard times, hard lines—for she does not yield easily: the irresolute or dissolute fall away, and become paupers and incumbrancers of the earth; it is only the self-sacrificing who will succeed.

I know a man, a south of Scotland native, and the son of a farmer.

He came of a good old yeoman stock, who had tilled land in bleak Scotland for centuries—that is, struggled against fate to keep up an honest name.

The father of this young man became security for a friend (they don't do that sort of thing often nowadays), and the friend left him in the lurch (as friends will do), the consequence being, that he died leaving his family almost destitute, yet without worldly reproach, for he had enough to pay his debts.

The sons went different ways to seek fortune ; but it is the fortune of the second son I want you to follow.

He was lucky enough to be able to borrow a small sum of money—enough to pay his passage out to Australia, with just a little left after he got there.

He had a stern Caledonian spirit of his own, and left Scotland with the idea that until he could refund that borrowed money he was not a free man.

He landed in Melbourne in the early days, when it was just beginning its glorious career—a few houses put up, and the lines planned out for the future grand streets.

There wasn't much to see in the place then, so he didn't waste his time, but took a job straight away, putting what cash he had brought into the bank ; it was as general hand on a station, and, as he had a good practical knowledge of cattle, he managed to make himself useful to his master in buying and selling.

He stayed two or three years with his first master, paying out of his wages his debt first, and afterwards laying the rest of his earnings in the bank, all the while gaining colonial experience, and looking about him at his odd times of leisure.

He did not let his money lie quite idle either, but when he saw a chance, while purchasing cattle for his master, he bought and sold on his own account ; lucky in his guesses, or, rather, gifted with foresight, he knew just when to buy and when to sell.

In his employer's interest and his own he made several trips to New Zealand, and, as he said himself, felt tempted to purchase land there, but resisted, as he was growing attached to Victoria ; so that he contented himself with buying or selling cattle.

So it went on year by year, his bank account growing while he waited on his chance.

The time came when cattle went down so low in price that they could be had for almost nothing. It was one of the depressions of a young colony : no one wanted to buy—perhaps it was a time of drought—everyone wished to sell.

My friend drew all his money out, and spent it on cattle, having faith in the rise, which came almost immediately—

perhaps an unexpected rain, which only a clear-headed Border-man could foresee.

When he next sold his sheep and cattle he had laid the foundation of his fortune, and could afford to look out for himself.

The Governments of new colonies always hold out inducements for settlers to take up land as far away from the centres as possible—they want the country to be opened up.

My friend went to look for land one hundred and fifty miles from Melbourne, right into the Western District, at that time a wild scrub, with only swarms of blacks to dispute it.

He fixed upon his site, and bought what he could afford to buy right away. This was a standing principle of his—only to take what he could afford to pay for on the nail.

The ground which he fixed upon was, without exception, the finest soil throughout Victoria, although at the time so densely covered with scrub that it meant the labour of a Hercules to reclaim it.

Chance again helping him, as with the sheep? No; he had studied geology, farm-chemistry, and botany at home, as well as farm-work and cattle, and so knew exactly what he wanted, and was able to recognise it at a glance when he saw it before him.

A man possessed of patience, perseverance, restraint, and knowledge—those were the qualities which brought fortune to him; he could wait for what he wanted, and work while waiting.

I do not think that I ever realised the full grandness of any story of heroic effort so vividly before, as I did when I heard this old Scotch squatter relate a few of the events of his early struggles in the Colonies. He spoke in terse sentences, relating mighty feats (that to me eclipsed those great actions of the past which we are apt to regard as ancient myths) as incidents by the way, not worthy of more than a passing allusion.

I had read of the work of the Romans in their British road-making, of Hannibal leading his army over the Alps, of the march of the 'Ten Thousand,' and the daily twenty-mile running exercise of the soldiers of Old Egypt before

breakfast, and regarded them as quite simple feats after I had listened to the early hardships of this Australian prince.

He had taken me up the sides of a mountain belonging to his estate, and while resting, halfway up, on a spot which he indicated as a good place to sit and gather breath, he related in a few sentences his tale.

We could look over the western plains for forty miles—a beautiful prairie of rolling grass. From the top of that mount you could see the distant ranges, ninety miles away, so clear was the atmosphere.

Thirty-five years ago his estate had been densely covered with scrub and ti-tree—all to be cleared away before any profit could be had from the land.

Lavish Nature struggled against him to retard his progress; a couple of years, if left alone, would choke up the cleared ground. Natives in whole tribes came to dispute the ground, and had to be propitiated and kept at bay; snakes, dingoes, and cattle going astray, with escaped convicts and bushrangers to guard against constantly day and night.

As he could not afford horses, he did his work of clearing with bullocks. Once a year he made a pilgrimage to Melbourne or Geelong to buy his year's provisions, through a trackless country beset with a thousand dangers to a dray so laden.

He had at first only a little bark hut, and was compelled to turn his cattle loose every night, and trust in Providence to find them in the early morning.

Any one who knows the nature of bullocks must be aware that they will wander miles, seeking for food, between sunset and sunrise.

Where his first hut was raised lay about five miles from the mountains, and in order to track his team he had as the leader a snow-white bullock, so that where he went the others were sure to follow; and it was by the aid of this white one that he knew where to find the others.

Every morning at daybreak, before beginning his work for the day, he had to trudge through these five miles of bush, and climb this mountain to where we then sat. From this spot he was able to overlook the country, and see the

white spot of his leader amongst the dark scrub ; and then he knew where they were.

Sometimes they would be between him and the mountain upon which he stood ; but sometimes they were ten, or even more miles distant, on the other side of the hut.

This, of course, meant ten miles from his clearing, and back again, with that stiff hill climb, if he was fortunate, and twenty, or even thirty, miles if they had wandered, before he could begin the labours of the day.

‘How it all came I know not,’ he finished up his tale by saying. ‘I often wonder, even to this day, how my fortune grew ; but it did, year after year getting larger, until I am as you see.’

One of my fellow-passengers had informed me that this gentleman, whom he knew intimately, could drop his two hundred thousand and not miss it—one of the soundest men in the flourishing colony.

So much for cattle and land, for this successful colonist had never allowed himself to be tempted by the gold-fever, which had brought so many other squatters into the clutches of mortgage companies. He had never stretched his hand farther than he could safely reach, and never stepped from the ground which he had once found to be firm under his feet.

CHAPTER VIII

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Mortality of Sheep—The Rabbit and Sparrow Plagues—A Run through Adelaide—Landing in Melbourne—A Tragic Idyll.

THESE were only a few of the early troubles of the colonist : there were seasons of drought, when the sheep died by tens of thousands, and the unhappy owners could only look on with impotent pity, while all the grassless sheep-runs were strewn with grizzly skeletons, and starving mothers stood over their perishing lambs, helplessly glaring on the brazen heavens with glazing eyes—a pitiful and

heartrending sight, which may be prevented in time, as science advances.

Then came the sentimentalists who introduced the rabbit and the sparrow, and lived to witness the curses which they brought upon the land, and be execrated by their fellows; sentiment is such a deadly quality when it has not common sense to back it up.

How these rabbits and sparrows multiplied! My friend, the squatter, told me that he has seen as many as ten hundred thousand rabbits sitting teaching their young how best to demolish the land. At one time, in the crater of this mountain, there was no keeping them under. He had spent over a hundred thousand pounds trying to exterminate them, and still they were plentiful on all sides. He tried cats; but even they grew surfeited on rabbit, and became domiciled in the warrens, and, in some instances, contracted marriages with the tribe, producing a strange mongrel breed, with the habits and instincts of both finely balanced. With a strong body of rabbit-hunters he was just able to keep headway against them; but it was only by waging unrelaxing warfare, and with constant and vast expenses, that this was managed. Verily, the life of an Australian squatter is not all honey or the storing up of riches.

It was with great regret that I was forced to leave Albany so soon. I should have liked to have missed a mail, and taken the next steamship, for it is one of the most ideal places to live in any one could desire who longs for a quiet life; however, one consolation I had, and that was that I should see it once more after my work was done. I felt so high-spirited and generous-minded as we returned from Mount Possession, that I thought I could easily forgive my worst enemy; indeed, it was with great difficulty that I resisted the impulse to embrace our disagreeable and thin-lipped passenger as I met her near the Post Office, contenting myself instead by shaking her warmly by both hands, in spite of her frowns, and inviting her to join our party in a shandy-gaff. I told her that it was impossible to bear malice on such a day and in such a climate, and I felt gratified to see the thin lips somewhat relax, for she was Australian

born, and proud of her great land ; so that before she could quite recover her lost dignity we had pledged each other in the effervescing cup, and I felt how magical a climate Australia must be to work such wonders. After this the lion and the lamb may sit down together, and Scripture be fulfilled.

We all grow very quiet and sentimental on board as we near the end of our journey ; those who use the pipe or cigarette fill up and light often. A general unrest pervades the smoke-room and saloon, and the hours seem to drag. We have to say ' Good-bye,' and it is astonishing how painful a word it is to say, considering how short a time we have known each other.

At last the moment has arrived. We have seen Glenelg, and the handsome city of Adelaide, with its carefully-kept Botanic Gardens and fine background of mountain ranges, and dropped a great number of our friends, who mean to stay there, or else go overland by train to Melbourne, while we go on by sea to Port Phillip.

It has been a dry season at Glenelg, and everywhere the country looks parched and dusty. Yet it is a pleasant seaport place, like a little Margate, only ever so much cleaner and newer looking, with the blue waters breaking gently against the white sands, the grey ranges behind, and the Capital resting brightly in mid-distance. We get some of the finest grapes which we have ever tasted in our lives here, which go far to counteract the effects of the pecks of fine dust which we are forced to swallow in our inland walk.

Adelaide has been so much described and praised by some of the passengers that I felt almost satisfied to take all its perfections for granted—the grandeur of Mount Lofty in sunshine, or when enveloped in clouds, as it towers beyond the city its 2,300 feet in air ; the fertility of the plains ; the beauty of the fine streets and well-built houses and mansions ; the thriving appearance of the inhabitants : I have to grant all, and feel that no one dare grumble either at the arrangement or position of South Australia's chief town ; it is all that the heart can desire. But we are too near to the end of our ocean-journey to be able to do it full

justice, or pay much attention to its many perfections. We rush over the Gardens, post letters at the Post Office, look into the Torrens River, loaf about the streets in an aimless fashion, and once more get under way for the city of the south—Melbourne.

It is a lovely morning when we steam into Port Phillip—one of those white mornings when everything is luminous, yet softly defined, with quick, silver lights and dove-wing shadows.

First the Heads, with the lighthouses leading the way in; then the forty miles of lake-like waters, with the distant shores spreading out, then past vessels of all kinds going out or coming in, for Port Phillip is always busy; then the approach to Sandridge and Williamstown, with the forests of tapering masts between us and the great city, which has been rebuilt three times within the past fifty years, and which has spread itself out like Aladdin's palace; then the rattling of chains as the anchors are dropped at the wharf, and we are scattered, vowing all sorts of vows of fidelity and friendships which few of us ever afterwards have a chance of renewing.

It is fully fifteen years since I last landed at Williamstown, and but for the uniformity of the streets of Melbourne, the familiar Post Office and unfinished pile at the top of Bourke Street, it is completely changed.

That pile, the Houses of Parliament, appears to be, however, just as it was when I last saw it. The scaffolding grown a little greyer with the years, hiding what the workmen are doing behind it, is an old friend which makes the changes round me appear the more startling. I feel warmed up as I look on the planks and tracery of poles and supports; old memories of funny and tragic incidents crowd back, as if they had occurred only yesterday; old hopes, aspirations, romances and disappointments, so that I touch the boards lovingly and wonder if, when next I come, they will be still there to greet me on landing, or will the vast building be finished, and the network taken away and destroyed like so many of my other fancies.

I remember one night long ago standing here and think-

ing over the problem of next day's dinner, while I leisurely puffed at the vile weed which my last coppers had procured me. It was close upon eight o'clock, and the twilight was fast closing in over the city—a rich twilight of purple and gold.

Already the lamps were lighted, and I could see the city spread out like a big chessboard. By the way, the buildings must be much higher now, for in those days I could look over a wide extent of crossing streets marked out brightly with the lamps. Now I can only look down Bourke Street.

As I smoked, and pondered upon this important social problem, I noticed two outlines a little way from me, dark against the violet duskiness beyond—two men, with billycock hats, standing opposite one another, and smoking cigars, also with their heads turned towards the town clock. I don't know how they came to attract my attention particularly, for they were merely clasping hands as if about to part, while with their disengaged hands they touched one another on the foreheads. Perhaps it was this rather eccentric method of parting which attracted me.

It was just on the stroke of eight, I could see by a side glance at the glowing clock-face; yet what a long time it seemed to be before the first stroke sounded, and with what a curious anxiety I waited and listened.

'One' at last rang out, and as I listened for the second peal, a loud report of pistols drowned its sound, while the figures became slightly obscured by blue smoke.

I saw them stand still for a second while the smoke rolled from them, and then both slid gently to the ground. I ran forward with some other passers-by to see what was the matter.

There we found them face upwards, their hands still tightly clasped and just a little space between them, with the disengaged hands spread outside, and in each hand—a smoking revolver.

They were both dead, simultaneously shot through their heads, their hats only fallen off as they fell, two tiny rivulets of blood trickling down over their eyes, and half-bitten through, but still firmly clenched between their set teeth, the partly-consumed cigars; that seemed the only life about

them when we reached them, for the revolvers had ceased to fume—two thin wreaths of silvery smoke curling softly upwards from the vermilion ends of their cigars, through the purple muddle of distant buildings, getting lost in the saffron hues of the dying day.

This was their novel method of committing suicide, of which I had unconsciously acted as a witness. I found out all about them afterwards: they were two friends, who had been at the diggings together, and being lucky, had come down to Melbourne to enjoy themselves. Here they had fallen in love with a barmaid, who, however, had given neither of them the slightest encouragement.

This was their one bar of discord in a long and warm colonial friendship. They liked each other too well to part company, and they loved the woman too frantically, either to be able to give her up altogether, or yield her even for friendship; so that, instead of tossing up which should go and try his fortune first, after a long time of indecision they arrived at the mad conclusion to die in the way they had done. Before dying, however, they went to a photographer's and had their likenesses taken in the position in which I first saw them; they had just posted this carte, with letters of farewell, to the fascinating but fatal barmaid, bequeathing to her all their possessions, before coming up to watch the clock.

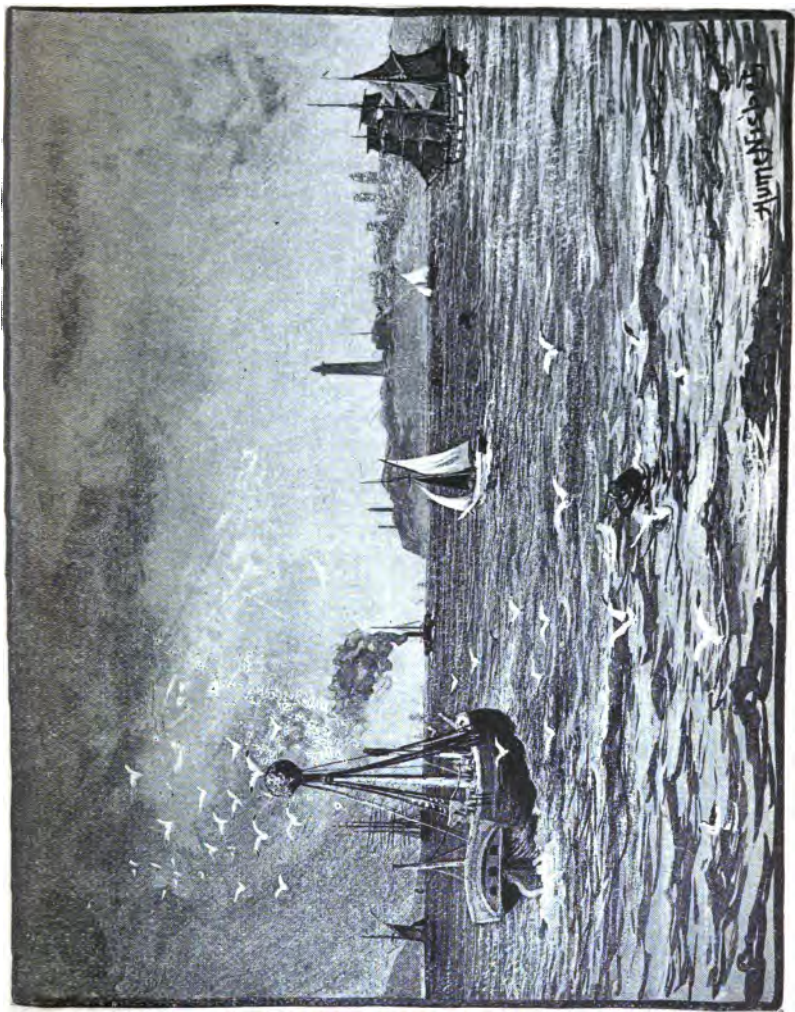
An idyll of the early days of gold-digging! the sardonic part of all being that the barmaid had a lover of her own, whom she made happy by marrying shortly afterwards on the strength of the fortune which the two hapless young diggers had left her.

CHAPTER IX

MELBOURNE

Fashionable Melbourne—Robert Russell—Old Melbourne—Free Library—A Spoilt Epic—Floods—My Old 'Coach.'

It is well-nigh impossible, as one walks about Melbourne of to-day, to realise that it can be so young, and that there are



PORT PHILLIP HEADS



men still alive who saw it as the happy hunting-grounds of the aboriginal, without a hut standing—a wild and uncleared bush.

What a mighty and magnificent city it is, in its modern regularity! Bourke Street, big and little; Collins Street, where the fashionable people parade on a Saturday morning 'doing the block,' where you will see women whose equals for physical beauty, stature, and grace of carriage are nowhere else to be seen in the world; they all look goddesses as they glide along—Greek ideals, who have only discarded the simplicity of costume for the more gorgeous creations of Paris and her prince of dressmakers. Collins Street, round by Mullen's Library, on a Saturday forenoon, is a moving phantasmagoria of colour and loveliness, with a crowd of faultlessly-attired, eye-glassed exquisites thrown in by way of relief to the almost overpowering brilliancy of the feminine division. The sun shines brightly, the combinations of fashionable tones commingle and cast soft shadows on the clean pavement. Columned and frescoed buildings rear high above them, with wide stretches of street. The densest crowd must always appear dwarfed in the vast spaces of those roomy streets. The shop-windows far surpass those of London and Paris for magnitude and display.

As we stroll about inhaling the delicate perfumes from the floating draperies, gazing upon the beautiful and refined faces, we wonder if these super-refined and languid affectations—these cigarette-smoking and eye-beglazed woman-hunters, can be the descendants of the Spartan and rugged makers of this mighty land. It is a hard matter to find space, even in these wide spaces, for a thought of the black-fellows and the wilds of fifty years ago.

I spent a day and night looking over the sights of Melbourne, and listening to the reminiscences of one of the original surveyors who planned it out as a future *probable* site for a township, but who, at the time he planned it out, did it for an amusement while waiting on orders from Sydney, without enough belief in his own idea to purchase any of the ground at a time when he might have had acres of it for a few shillings.

Robert Russell still lives at Richmond, one of the

suburbs, far from being a wealthy man, getting his living by sketching portions of the city which might have been his own, if he had only been 'cute enough fifty years ago.

'I look upon it as my own,' he observed, airily; for he is a cheerful old man. 'I saw it born, and have watched it grow up.'

He showed me his old sketches, and generously gave me permission to use any of them I might fancy. We went into the Free Library together. What a wonderful library that is, and how many a happy day I have spent in it long ago!

I think there is no Free Library anywhere in the civilised world like it. One may be able to find more volumes in the British Museum, but not one-tenth of the seclusion or comfort for readers that there is in the Melbourne Free Library.

You pass through a cool hall with exhibition rooms about, up a wide staircase, at the foot of which will be found soap, water, and towels for those who desire to wash their hands or cool them when they are hot. Upstairs is the Library, a long apartment with galleries round it, and leather-covered tables and chairs ranged about the centre. A delicious perfume of morocco leather pervades the place. Not too much light to distract the reader. It is all quiet, subdued and comfortable, as any student's room should be.

But it is in the recesses, which line the great room, that rest and comfort are to be found to the fullest extent. Each recess is devoted to its own school or country, and is provided with tables and chairs, all leather-covered. Through these recesses I have flitted when tired of my book, getting acquainted with all nationalities: Hindoo, Chinese, Japanese, &c., students who sat in their own divisions, and who could just comprehend enough English to exchange ideas on the best of their authors for those of ours. I have read to them the finest passages of the authors I liked best, while they translated the wisdom of theirs to me. So I learned from the disciples and worshippers themselves all the beauties of their different religions, poets, and historians, and to venerate Vishnu, Brahma, Buddha, and Confucius, as well as the mythology of my own countrymen.

I was very young at this time, and one of my ambitions was to write an epic on Lord Nelson and his noble actions; so I came here to learn all that books could teach me about him. After devouring the English laudations I went into the French, Spanish and Italian departments, and got their writers of the period translated. I think that I would have been much happier if I had gone no further than John Bull's version. I could then have set to work and glorified my brave hero; as it was, I drew a line between the different accounts, and entitled my doggerel 'Carracioli.' I had not reckoned upon that skeleton when I dreamt of my conception, neither did I take into consideration the fascinating Emma Hamilton; but after my dive below the surface I found that they both filled up the foreground, with a pale thin ghost behind called 'Nelson.' The poem was a failure, and I am glad of it.

My friend Russell and I had a discussion on the city young men who were so prominent in the stalls of theatres, bar-rooms, Gunter's, and on 'the block.' He said:—

'No, don't take these as specimens of our young colonials; these are mostly loafers from the old country, or lads not yet fledged. You must go into the bush to see what our sons and daughters are like: there the work is done; here they come to amuse themselves. One thing you may rely upon, the real boys soon get tired of this tomfooling and weak imitation of West-End Londonism, and go back to help their fathers and brothers all the better for their hour of folly. The confirmed fools die young here, so that the colonies are none the worse for them. Our motto is "Advance Australia," and we never turn our backs on that for dead or dying traditions.'

I felt comforted at these words, for my recollections of the men of fifteen years before coincided with his opinions.

It was on October 5, 1836, that Robert Russell and his assistants arrived at Port Phillip by the brig 'Stirling-shire.' He had been instructed to survey the shores of Port Phillip Bay, and ascertain the breadth, width, and navigable capabilities of the river Yarra. While doing this work he made a plan of the future city of Melbourne, marking out the streets as they now stand.

The Wawoorong, Boonoorong and Wantourong tribes occupied the land at this time, but they had sold their rights to Batman a year before, when he had landed and corroborated with the native women and children, and afterwards, in consideration of blankets, looking-glasses, tomahawks, beads, scissors, &c., the men of the tribes granted to him and his heirs for ever 600,000 acres of their land—the site of Melbourne. He did not get this grant sanctioned by his Government, so that his gifts of beads and looking-glasses must be looked upon as deeds of benevolence. However, if he did not get the land, the Government gave him the looking after it by appointing him to the post of District Constable, in 1837.

To give an idea how the population increased in this new city I need only quote statistics. On August 15, 1835, Port Phillip had a population of 14 souls; the census taken in 1881 gave the population at 860,000.

At the time Russell made his plan of the future city there were one or two huts and some canvas tents standing. Most of his sketches are dated 1837, one of them, which is called 'Melbourne from the Yarra Falls,' showing three or four rough wood huts surrounded by fences, and a few tents—that to the right being the surveyor's, Mr. F. R. D'Arcy. The two huts in the centre belong to the enterprising Fawcner, who, in spite of the efforts of the original Batman, was busy cultivating his eighty acres of land. He started the first Victorian paper, which he called the *Melbourne Advertiser*, and opened the first institution of civilisation—a public-house; it was two years afterwards that the church came on the field. In the left-hand corner stand Hall's tents, and behind these are Smith's huts.

The Commandant's house at the time was a very rough shed, standing between Spencer and King Streets, with, behind it, the tents of the first Governor—Sir Richard Bourke.

This was Melbourne in the years 1836-7—a few primitive huts on Batman's Hill, scattered widely apart. To be particular, Melbourne—or, as it was then called, 'Bear-grass'—comprised 13 buildings, viz., 3 weatherboard, 2 slate, and 8 turf huts. The present area of the city is fully

7 square miles, the principal streets being over a mile in length and 99 feet in width, metalled and flagged a good 100 miles, and with nearly 2,000 gas lamps, and over 80 newspapers and magazines—a pretty considerable increase in half a century.

It would take up a large volume in itself to relate all the adventures which these early citizens had with blacks and bushrangers. The blacks were patriotic enough to continue hostile to the invaders until they were finally exterminated; the latter were always cropping up—escaped convicts from Sydney and Tasmania, some of the Dick Turpin type, others cowardly and bloodthirsty, but all great nuisances, yet serving to prove what stuff these plucky and reckless pioneers were made from. Still things went on, and land rapidly rose in value.

There is a legend that the ground in Bourke Street where the Post Office stands, and which is now valued at 1,000*l.* per square foot, was purchased by a sailor for a gallon of rum and some pounds of tobacco. This sailor got his deeds made out properly, sailed away, and has not been heard about since; perhaps he lit his pipe with them; but if not, what a colossal fortune waits upon his heirs, if he left any, and they ever fall across these lightly-won title-deeds.

Three allotments of ground, about half an acre each, situated in Collins Street, were purchased at the first Government land sale on June 1, 1837, by Chas. H. Ebdon, for 136*l.*, and sold again publicly by auction for 10,224*l.*, on September 14, 1839.

Fifteen years ago they had open gutters in Melbourne, which looked very picturesque with their foot-bridges over them, and as a fairly constant stream of water ran down them, they had a cooling effect when seen on a dry summer day; but they had their disadvantages as well as dangers, so they have been altered to underground sewerage. I do not think this improvement has added to the healthiness of the city, but I suppose it had to be done.

Sometimes, when the rains came on, it was next to impossible to cross the streets, owing to the torrents which poured down the gutters and covered even the raised bridges. Once I saw a man drowned in Bourke Street. The

bridges were submerged, and he made a wrong step, and before he could recover himself, he was swept under the bridge, jammed inside, and choked before the passengers were able to extricate him. This happened in the crowded street during the afternoon, and was not, I believe, a very uncommon accident.

It is astonishing how quickly the floods come on sometimes in the colonies. The Post Office, which stands at the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets, is in the valley, for Melbourne is built on two hills. This Elizabeth Street during wet weather used to be a roaring river, where boats could be rowed about. One dry morning, while I was waiting my turn for letters at the Post-Office on a mail day, I was startled by seeing a great tidal wave rolling along Elizabeth Street and swamping the shops as it reached them. Pedestrians were racing for life before it to seek high ground; we on the platform of the Post-Office rushed for all the high parts we could reach. I got up the ornamental base of one of the pillars and clung there, with the water dashing over my waist, while some of the less fortunate ones were swept away. This wave came upon the city unexpectedly, for we had not seen rain for months; yet it had been raining up the country, and this was the result.

Again, I was spending the evening with a bachelor friend, who occupied a small cottage somewhere near Emerald Hill. To get here there used to be a long wooden bridge, with handrail, over the swamp. It came on raining while we were engaged talking, and although the house was raised on piles, very soon the floor was covered with the rising flood, so that we had to go into the upper regions, and stay there prisoners, without food for two days, with table and chairs floating about in the room downstairs, and all our provisions under water. The flood fell on the second day, so that we managed to wade out and get up to Emerald Hill, and lay in a supply of food, but I did not get back to my lodgings until the fourth day.

Where that friend is now I cannot say, or how we became first acquainted. I fancy that it must have been that we met in a common lodging-house, and so drew to one another. He had been a schoolmaster in the old

country, and in the colonies had gone gold-digging; which he liked much better than teaching. When he made enough money he came down to Melbourne and enjoyed himself, buying and reading books, or going to the theatre. He was a good critic, and took a great delight in correcting my plays, stories, and poetry; he was my first appreciative audience, and, better, an impartial critic of my errors. Some young men have the privileges of Oxford, but I had better—the coaching and judgment of a deep student of books, and of the world as well, to put me right. He said I had genius and would make a mark. I trust that he was also a prophet.

When he went to the theatre he sat in the gallery, for he wished to prolong his life in town and economise his money. He was one of the most careless men as to external appearance, but told me to be particular as to mine, for it was more often the cover than the contents of a book which caused it to be sold.

I tried to find out my old friend the last time I was in Victoria, but could not; he had vanished like the old wooden houses where we used to meet; yet, perhaps, if he still lives, he may recall the days we spent together in the Free Library or the streets: how he criticised the plays and the poems, picking out the good parts and drawing his pen across the bad. He may remember the nights he used to watch me come on the stage (I was stage-struck at the time, and tried to be an actor), and understand how much I owe to him, and how I would like to prove my gratitude and veneration, if only I could do so.

CHAPTER X

MELBOURNE (*continued*)

Theatrical Experience—Little Bourke Street—Paddy's Market—
Melbourne Life under the Surface—Something more to be Desired
than Laudanum.

THE Theatre Royal is not much changed from what it was in the olden days. It is still in the same place, about

the middle of Bourke Street, but I do not think that they used to decorate the walls of its vestibule with the awful posters and advertisements which they do now, or else I was more easily satisfied in those days with artistic externals, and so have forgotten; but I got a shock when I went into it the last time to see it all covered over like a London hoarding. It was like meeting an old and respected friend, after fifteen years' separation, as a 'sandwich-man'; it made me melancholy, and almost spoilt my pleasure in the play.

I appreciate trade and the advances of commerce as well as any one can, only it should be as much subordinate in the temples of art, poesy, and religion, as it can possibly be. Suggest it delicately if it must be done at all, as I suppose it must, both in theatres, art galleries, and churches, only keep it from overpowering the sentiment, or else the influence is utterly lost.

I stuck long and obstinately to my fallacy that I would make an actor. Twice every twenty-four hours did I walk along Little Bourke Street to the stage entrance for six or eight months, dreaming dreams, and refusing to be awakened; but at last I was cured.

How overpoweringly cheeky a boy can be. As a specimen of my histrionic ability, I gave the manager, stage-manager, and a big audience of accomplished actors and actresses, the love scene in 'Romeo and Juliet,' the death scene in 'Othello,' and the soliloquy in 'Hamlet.' It astonishes me to this day that they did not all laugh. I think that my audacity must have stupefied them into silence, for the manager observed, after a gasp or two, 'Yes, you may come on if you like as super. We want respectable young fellows if we can get them.'

My salary as super was to be 15s. per week, stockings and sundries found for me. I think that I would have liked it very well on these terms, and starved myself on 15s. weekly out of pure affection for the profession; but my gorge rose at carrying on furniture and laying the carpets, for the audiences were very personal at these times, and I was very sensitive and proud. So after the first night of humiliation, I rebelled, and refused to do that

'Now, on you go, youngster!' whispered the prompter, as I stood shivering and almost blind with horror at the wings; and on I rushed, with the whole stage and audience a blank before me, and uttered with full dramatic force:

'Buckingham is ta'en. Off with his head! Ha! ha! So much for Buckingham!'

I got no further and remember no more, except that the bloody Richard seized me in his remorseless clutches, and after shaking me backwards and forwards fiercely, all the while roaring words which were not to be found in Shakespeare, ignominiously kicked me off the stage, amid the wild laughter of the house in front, while the curtain rang down.

I was too ambitious, my friend the manager thought; while I felt that I would never conquer my stage nervousness, and so straightway wisely discarded the buskin.

Still, if I did not learn to act, my stage experience was not lost, for I learnt a lot of business useful to me in other ways, business which successful playwrights and dramatists will be able to understand and appreciate.

I went through Little Bourke Street again, this last time with a couple of detectives, visiting the Chinese opium-dens and gambling-houses, a full account of which I have already written for Cassell's 'Picturesque Australasia,' so I need not go over it now; only that while it did not take away my admiration for much in John Chinaman, in spite of those particular vices which are to be seen in Little Bourke Street, it made me regret that such dens are allowed to stand in the centre of such a city.

It is not the Chinese I object to so much in this quarter as the European refugees, male and female, who are there to be discovered. 'Johnny' in Victoria is a model of cleanliness and industry, and as the times go, honest also. His Fan-tan is a game of chance entirely, in which he deals fairly with his customers, taking the same risk himself that they take, and losing his money much more placidly and philosophically than they do.

In the smoking-dens also it is not the Celestial who disgusts us. Somehow it seems as natural to see a Chinaman smoke opium as to meet a New Guinea native without a pair of pants on, but it is those awful white men and

women who are to be met there who horrify us. Those sedate, quiet-voiced, educated housebreakers, pickpockets, and cut-throats, who gather here, and will discourse on the literature of the day with one another when they are not plotting outrage of the vilest order; those fair-faced, lady-like women who look modest and lovable, souls damned to the lowest Hades, who have grown so refined and subdued in all kinds of nameless vice, that nothing can stir up their torpid livers, for they have exhausted the most unnatural. Educated to the full—all are highly educated in the colonies, for State schools are free, and education compulsory to the vilest—they have acquired all that the board teachers can teach them, and surpass for villainy the world.

'Our pickpockets are the most highly accomplished on earth, our murderers the most heartless,' said my guide, the detective, proudly; and as I went amongst them and looked round I could not doubt him.

Little Bourke Street is what I would fancy hell may be after this world has *progressed* and abolished all traditions of the past, when men and women have probed everything material and scientific, and outgrown all emotions, tastes, appetites, pleasures, desires, natural and unnatural; when the blue-stockings and scholars have torn the veil from everything sacred or tender, and the scientific blind moles have thoroughly vivisected life; when the fulness of time has come, and the leaders of thought are scandal-mongers and mud-stirrers, or else flippant cynics and classical atheists; in fact, when we have all damned ourselves utterly and beyond redemption, and left the poor old Devil, like Othello, with his 'occupation gone.'

Paddy's Market is one of the institutions of Melbourne. It is all covered in now, and lighted with electric lamps, which have a beautiful, fairy-like effect. With the vegetable and fruit stalls, it presents a busy, lively scene on a Saturday night, full of character and colour; something for a painter to revel in.

Fifteen years ago it was not all covered in, and had no electric lights. Tramps, outcasts, and homeless vagabonds used to congregate here and pass the night out of the dew, for there were corrugated-iron roofs over some parts of it.

I had to pass here nightly, after the theatre was over, to reach my lodgings in Little Collins Street, and witnessed some piteous sights—men, women, children, honest and dishonest, virtuous and vicious, all lay huddled together for warmth, mostly all starving.

Why? Perhaps they had come out to the country without consideration, and in ignorance of what it was. Emigration at the time had something to do with it. Unscrupulous home agents, for the sake of their fees, had launched out hordes of subjects unfit for the land. The labourers and tradesmen were all right, also the domestic servants; they got places easily and made money, and found comforts such as they could not find in England. It was the professionals who suffered: writers, lawyers, governesses (ladies and gentlemen), who lay here huddled together, starving, helpless, and hopeless.

Some of those who loved virtue and honesty better than life, went down to the river Yarra and found a solution of their difficulties there; but the bulk of them had not the courage to die, or the brains to think it fully out, so, instead of turning their backs on town and old traditions, they loafed about the streets by day, and lay under the shelter of Paddy's Market by night.

: I used to disturb them sometimes as I picked my way amongst them in the dark; sometimes I trod by accident on dainty limbs, to hear a groan or a moan in answer to my apology.

One night a lady accosted me at the corner of Swanston Street. She was famishing, had not tasted food for three days, and was ready to give herself up for a crust of bread. By a rare chance I had a sixpence in my pocket, which I gave her, and then she told me her story. She had been hired by a lady as companion out to Melbourne, and discarded when she landed; she had been educated at home to fill the place of a first-class governess, but could not get a place here, for she had not learnt to cook or wash; then, while looking about, she had been forced to pawn her clothing, so that she could no longer apply for a situation. What was there for her left?—the streets or the Yarra.

After three days of resistance and famishing, she had chosen the streets.

What could I do for her ? Nothing excepting that poor sixpence, for besides her there were hundreds of others in the same condition ; and yet, in spite of her pallor and exhaustion, she was very lovely, young and high bred.

Another night I had taken shelter from a shower of rain under a verandah in Spring Street ; there was only one young woman standing waiting, like myself, on the shower passing—a Jewess, as I could see by her dark, Semitic features, and not too beautiful ; yet, perhaps, the misery that was upon her had robbed her of some of her usual attractions ; those dark, heavy-lidded women get all so much of the *Mater Dolorosa* appearance when they are in misery.

Backwards and forwards she walked restlessly, while I stood still under the lamp shadow and watched the light play over her face as she crossed it, having nothing else to do. She was making up her mind for something, I could see, and I was speculating in a vague way upon what it could be, when all at once she stopped and faced me, saying :

‘ Do you think this rain will last long ? ’

‘ I don’t think so,’ I replied, and then a long pause, while we both stood together looking at the drops pouring over the gutter of the verandah. At last she spoke again :

‘ Would you mind doing me a favour, sir ? ’

‘ No ! That is, if I can. What is it ? ’

‘ I want some medicine from the chemist over there, but he will not give it to me ; perhaps he might give it to you if you tried.’

‘ Perhaps. What kind of medicine do you want ? ’

‘ A shilling’s worth of laudanum. Will you try ? ’

‘ Certainly,’ I said, taking the money from her and starting off ; then a thought struck me, and I turned back and faced her.

‘ What do you want it for, Miss ? ’

‘ Toothache. I have it frightfully to-night.’

‘ No you haven’t,’ I said quietly. ‘ It is heartache which ails you, and you want to kill yourself—is that not true ? ’

‘ Yes, you are quite right, I want to kill myself. Now, I suppose, you will be for giving me in charge.’

'No. I would rather help you to die if you are quite sure that you are done with life. But are you sure? Tell me all about it before I go for the poison.'

Then she told me how she had offended her kindred, the Jews, by becoming a Christian, and how they had cursed her and discarded her. She was a tailoress, but most of the trade was in the hands of the Jews, and they would not employ her, while the Christians had no room for her.

'I have just 3*l*. left now, the sum required to bury me and settle what I owe for lodgings; and I don't want to die in debt, or have a pauper's funeral.'

'But have you tried every shop in Melbourne?'

'Yes, all of them, without a hope of success.'

'Then I'll get you the laudanum; only I want a favour from you also before I get it.'

'What do you want?'

'I want you to live until to-morrow night and try all round once more. If you don't get a job to-morrow, then meet me here at six o'clock, and I'll do my best to get it for you; but if you do get a job, don't come. Now you know, I'll be here from six to half-past, so that if I don't meet you I shall know that you have been lucky. Is it a promise?'

'Yes, I promise to try once more, and do nothing rash until to-morrow night.'

I returned her shilling, and we shook hands and went separate ways; the rain was over by this time. Next night I waited at the place from six till half-past without seeing her; she had passed out of my life.

Six months afterwards I was waiting at the Post Office to ask about letters, when a pretty, laughing-faced young woman came up the steps, with a young man beside her. As soon as she saw me she darted forward and shook me warmly by the hand. I recognised the Jewess whom I had met under the Spring Street verandah.

'I got a job next day, so that I did not need to come back to you. Wonderful! wasn't it; and better, I also got a husband. I say, dear,' she cried to her companion, who came up to us, and who I also saw belonged to her own race, 'this is the young fellow who made me go the round

once more.' To me: 'This is my husband; I got a place after all in a Christian shop, the first I tried, and he was the foreman there. We have been married two months.'

'And are you still a Christian?' I asked, curiously.

'No! he cured me of that,' she answered, with a merry laugh.

CHAPTER XI

MELBOURNE (*continued*)

Colonial Institutions—Fitzroy Gardens—Old Friends and Times—Our Commonwealth—The Yarra Yarra.

THE colonials are justly proud of their fine buildings, their churches, institutions, gardens, State schools, laws, and independence. They eclipse England in everything; and it is only right that they should do so, for they began where we ended. Laying their foundation of prosperity upon the experience of slow centuries, they started straight away with the latest improvements in Pullman cars, cable omnibuses, and political economy, having the extra advantage over us of nothing in the way of antiquity or tradition to hamper them or keep them back.

There were no poor branches of decayed aristocratic families to make billets for. If the wealthy colonial longs to make an alliance with blue blood, that is his own particular vanity, which does not concern the State. The Members of Parliament are chosen from and for the people, and there is no House of Lords to throw cold water upon everything which smacks of advance. There are no armies of useless taxmen walking about and draining the life-blood of the people. The *ad valorem* duty protects the people from that waste, and citizens only pay for what they consume, as it ought to be. The police are the people's servants and not their masters, and the colonial workman is a man and not a serf.

What I have said of city life here below the surface may be said of all large towns; in London how much worse it is,

where starvation is intensified by the cruel ice, snow, and fogs ! At least, the loafer has the sun to warm him in Australia, and if he can only leave the town and banish all ideas of what he was, and is willing to take any kind of work, the rags which may make him despised in the city will not be noticed in the bush.

I do not wish to write what has been written before, or quote from books, excepting where it is necessary to give statistics, and as I can only breathe freely in the country, and feel choked and cynical in cities, I shall give you as little as I possibly can of the cities, and as much as I can of my experiences under the gum trees.

The old wooden houses are all replaced by palatial buildings in imperishable blue stone, with granite, marble, or sandstone facings and ornaments. I used to live in an old wooden house opposite the Fitzroy Gardens. One of my first visits was to that place, but it was all changed, so that I could not decide which was the site. I went into the Gardens, which were also all improved out of recognition, and tried to fix the spot where I used to lie in the moonlight nights, with the dews all about me and the mosquitoes humming around ; but I had to give it up, and wander down the sheltered walks instead, making sketches and watching the ghostly gleaming of the southern moon as it lay over the many statues of Diana, &c., or in straight bars across the blackened pathways, with the velvety depth of the foliage. Diana is pretty prominent in the Fitzroy Gardens, which is a favourite resort of Melbourne lovers on moonlight nights.

What days and nights these were long ago with my companions, who were all ladies and gentlemen ! Had they been tradesmen or labourers, they would have been better housed than they could afford to be. We flaunted our shabby clothes brazenly about the principal streets, laughed over the comicality of our straits, and lay down on our canvas truckle beds famishing yet happy ; for we were all young, thoughtless, and had given no hostages to fortune, so that we did not require to bend our heads, but could afford to be merry, and substitute the want of dinner with stories of the magnificent dinners we had once enjoyed.

Ours was a commonwealth of poverty. None of us cared what he did, so long as the money was honestly made. One of my friends had been in a cavalry regiment. He was a big, strong fellow, and sometimes went out stone-breaking. The rest of us did whatever we could get to do, putting all the money we earned into the hands of the wives—for some of us had wives—to lay out to the best advantage. It was seldom that we were all fully employed, but that did not matter; those who were off duty helped to amuse the ladies at home.

We mixed with the lowest and vilest, but we kept ourselves apart, and none of us ever forgot that we were ladies and gentlemen, in spite of externals.

There was a French Count, who earned, I think, the least money, and yet was the most industrious of us all. He had spent his patrimony at the gambling-houses, and had a mania that, if he only got up early enough in the morning, before the scavengers started work, he might find a sovereign or a purse on the streets. So, to be sure of his game, he spent most of his days in bed, and most of his nights and early mornings prowling through the streets with stooping back and downcast eyes. I think he once found a half-crown, which confirmed him in his theory, and ruined our hopes of ever persuading him to give up the search.

Once we saw an advertisement for some work to be done by contract; that was a great day for the commonwealth. We all started in company to the place of appointment, to find about a hundred other contractors on the spot, trained and amateur. By-and-by the employer came, showed us the work, and asked us to state our prices, which after a diligent look round we did.

‘Thank you, gentlemen,’ said the would-be employer. ‘I have a brother to whom I have to give the job, only I wanted to be sure that he didn’t overcharge me. Brothers, you know, are apt to take advantage, ain’t they?’

He smiled pleasantly upon his thunderstruck audience as he finished his remarks; upon which the ex-cavalry captain stepped calmly over, and taking hold of the advertiser’s arm, observed:

‘Gentlemen, we have been invited from all parts of

Melbourne, and so lost the chance of a day's work, so that this affectionate brother may be able to grind down his relative. What ought we to do under the circumstances ?'

'Kick him all round,' yelled the enraged mob. Upon which the captain let go his hold, lifted his massive but well-worn boot, and set the example.

I don't know whether that brother got the job, but the one who had fooled us had a bad ten minutes before he made his escape.

The commonwealth has long ago broken up, and the members have returned to respectability and comforts, yet I don't think any of them will ever forget those olden days. I visited one of the married couples about a year after we had drifted apart. They were in affluent circumstances then, while I had been roughing it in the bush. A curious sensation came over me as I entered the drawing-room, and gingerly tried to balance myself on the edge of the slender art chair.

'It's quite strong enough to bear you,' remarked my hostess, seeing my nervousness lest I should break the chair if I sat full upon it. 'I understand your feelings, for we felt exactly the same when we first returned to civilisation.'

Then we got on to talking of old days. Her mother, who was a stately old dame, was visiting them at the time; but we all thought she had gone out, instead of which she had only gone to the verandah, and so could hear every word we uttered.

We were living it all over again, with 'Don't you remember so and so?' &c., which brought out another yarn hardly fit for ears uninitiated, and were just in the middle of a story about an occasion when we were all desperately hard up, when the French-window was opened, and the mother appeared, with a face white with horror.

'Do you mean to say that my daughter ever led such an awful life?'

'Yes, and it is one of the sweetest of our memories,' responded her daughter, with a sigh and moistened eyes. 'There has been nothing like it, now it is all over.'

Ah! those were the days of short commons and irre-

pressible spirits; the air was lung-invigorating, and with youth it was utterly impossible to feel any long fits of depression. They did come on sometimes, like the hot winds and 'brick-fielders,' but they quickly passed away, leaving renewed buoyancy, hope, and lightness of spirits.

The hot winds seem also to have grown more spiritless than in the olden times: then we could always depend upon three days of scorching, dry, magnetic blasts, as from a furnace, when all one could do was to lie about, day and night, trying to find the coolest planks—bed and sheets an impossibility—while the butter became oil and food obnoxious, with the fine, penetrating sand over everything. They were very methodical in their course; first a dry morning, with a brassy sun and a wind blowing softly, which appeared to take the pluck out of one; then hotter and hotter, until you lay about like a fish out of water, gasping; on the third afternoon came the 'brick-fielder,' a sudden tempest of red dust, before which the bravest had to fly; and close upon its heels the blessed tempest of rain, which renewed youth, revived all things, and made the next day glorious. Now the hot wind is uncertain and feeble; it may end in rain or not—one can never tell. I have always thought that these periodical hot, scorching blasts killed the microbes and animalculæ of fever and consumption, and so were the real saviours of the colonies.

Melbourne is particularly rich in gardens and reserves. The Carlton, although not so shady or classical as the Fitzroy, are wonderfully pretty, and have a beautiful lake, overhung by drooping trees, where one may sit in the hot days and feel cool. Here are situated the Exhibition buildings.

The Botanical Gardens are a very fine example of landscape gardening, designed by Guilfoyle out of a very barren waste by the side of the river Yarra, from which a good view of the city can be had, with a variegated foreground of leafage.

Toorak is a fashionable suburb of Melbourne; so is St. Kilda by the sea. Imposing palaces and vast gardens are the characteristics of Toorak, where much money is spent. St. Kilda is very lovely, cool and fresh, with the

deep blue waters studded with pleasure-craft, and sun-lit sands covered with fashionable dresses and gay parasols.

The Yarra Yarra is a serpentine river of about 150 miles in length, taking its rise in the southern spurs of the Dividing Range, and emptying itself into Salt Water River and Hobson's Bay, the port of Melbourne. It is a good river for boating since the Falls have been blasted away, with pretty banks, where the trees droop over and into it. It was once a pellucid stream, old colonials tell me, and, as I remember it, was a very capital place either for love-making or ending up the dream. Many lovers have found an eternal marriage here, for people in love seem mostly to take to water when they are in despair. Business troubles make a man prefer a lofty jump, with a reception of paving stones, as the appropriate termination to shattered schemes.

There was one incident that I recollect occurred on the banks of the Yarra Yarra, nearly opposite to the Botanical Gardens, which might have ended tragically but for my chum the ex-cavalry captain—whom I shall call Jack for short—and myself, and where our spirit of humanity was turned into ridicule.

One star-lit night (the stars are very luminous in the south) Jack and I were sitting under the shadow of the drooping trees, dreamily looking at the river and lazily smoking our pipes. We had not spoken to one another for ten minutes or more. The night was hot, and even the effort to puff seemed too much for us, so our pipes had gone out, and neither of us thought of re-lighting, when, close in front of us, we saw the figure of a young woman carrying a small dog start out of the darkness and sit down on the bank, close to the water's edge.

She had been crying as she came along, and started afresh as she sat fondling her dog, saying all sorts of endearing things to it and bidding it good-bye.

We both felt instinctively what she was going to do, and simultaneously laid down our pipes to be ready when the time came, holding our breath meanwhile.

At last she made her final speech to her pet, and, laying it down, all of a sudden sprang to her feet, making



the plunge forward. We both clutched her at the same moment, and pulled her back before more than the front end of her skirt was wet, although in the struggle we all slipped, fell in, and got drenched.

'Let me go, I tell you,' she said, making a savage bite at Jack's arm; but he held firmly, and brought her back, in spite of her frantic efforts to get away. Then, as we were trying to soothe her, the dog barking furiously all the while, a policeman came on the scene, grasped the situation at a glance, and promptly took her and the dog in charge, giving us both orders to attend the court next morning.

Next day Jack and I 'gave our evidence,' unwillingly enough, stating exactly what we had seen. Then came the girl's turn to speak. She had had a night to dry her dress, spruce herself up, and compose her story. She was a pretty, pale-faced girl, with hard, black eyes, and regarded us with great scorn.

She told the magistrate that she had merely gone down to the Yarra Yarra to drown her dog, mocked at our heroic efforts, and complained bitterly at being detained a night in prison through the blank stupidity of two officious fools.

The policeman scratched his head dubiously, but he was not called upon to speak. Then the grave old magistrate turned seriously upon us and read us a stern lecture, while all the people about the court laughed derisively at us. We took it all with crimson cheeks and dejected heads.

We got away at last without being mobbed, and the girl and her dog passed out in triumph; but when Jack turned the corner he vowed, with many adjectives, that it was the last woman he would try to save from drowning herself.

I had not much leisure to sentimentalise round Melbourne during this last visit; therefore, after making a hasty run over the city and what notes I required, I went over the suburbs, taking sketches of Williamstown, Sandridge, St. Kilda, &c., and got off as soon as possible towards Geelong.

From the top of Doncaster Tower, in the Heidelberg

direction, there is a fine but very distant view of the city to be seen. This tower is two hundred feet high, and a stiff climb, but easy to descend if one could only imitate the example of the sailor-guide there, who clutches hold of the wire-rope supports and slides down almost like flying. I did not try to descend that way. The trick wanted practice, therefore I contented myself with the stairway, after taking my sketches. It looks a beautiful landscape, seen from that height of two hundred feet, with Melbourne basking in the far distance on the one side and the country of Heidelberg and Beaconsfield on the other. It is also a pleasant seven-mile walk back in the cool of the evening, first with the sunset, then the pale moon lighting up the bark of the gum trees and giving them the appearance of leopards' skins.

The walk to Sandridge and Williamstown is also most interesting, and there I got fair pictures of the city, the shipping, White Tower, the Bay, bits of the Yarra Yarra and Salt Rivers. After this I packed up my traps and said *au revoir* to Melbourne.

CHAPTER XII

VICTORIA

The Western District—Towards Camperdown—Geelong—James Dawson, Author of 'The Australian Aborigine'—His Work—The Black-fellow and his Ways.

WHAT a delight it is for a man who loves open air, green trees, blue skies and solitude, and who abhors white collars and stiff neckties, to be able to turn his back on the city and all its artificial ways, and be able to fill and light his pipe, and work as he wants to work, without any affectation or restraint.

For the time being I am done with people and bustling streets; I don't want to see another book or picture worked by man. I only desire to look straight out and take direct lessons from the Great Master, study His effects, and see

how great they are, and how little the 'stylists' are. After all that has been said or written concerning Art, the camera is greater than all our small masters of the brush or pen.

I suppose my get-up looks like affectation: a pair of stiff leggings that I may tramp through snake country with comparative safety, my oldest trousers tucked in, a grey flannel shirt with the collar attached and a soft felt hat—this was the costume worn in the early days when men studied ease before elegance, and meant to work. I mean to work, and I don't wish to pay more than I can help for



washing, or take an article more with me than I can carry on the tramp. I know it is affectation in these refined modern days of the colonies, and I note the

amused look in the eyes of my fellow-passengers as I take my place on deck at Queen's Wharf for Geelong. But what of that? people have no right to wear stiff collars in a warm country, and every man ought to study his own fashion.

The wharf is busy this morning. I see the little steamer 'Dawn,' bound for Portland, getting up steam, making a rare mystery of smoke-fog, which I gloat over and note down. We are off at last, down the Yarra Yarra with its shipping and barges and buoys, past the junction of the Yarra and Salt Rivers; the city lies behind us, hazy and smoke-

enveloped from the steamers and factories between us and it.

Past Williamstown and Sandridge and into the open bay; a glorious morning, with grey effects of sunshine through clouds, the You Yang Mountains loom up, with one large bird flying overhead, and a clear sea between; nearer, details come out, and deep reflections trail over the bay. Now we are at the Geelong sand-bar, with its screaming flocks of white sea-birds and danger-posts—the great bar which spoilt for that town its chance of being the capital of Victoria, although the Victorians proved in Melbourne that they could surmount greater difficulties than the like of this, when they resolved to found a great city. The quiet little town lies before us at last, so peaceful and beautiful that I am glad they did not mar it by making it the capital, and then we are once more ashore.

I fix upon quiet lodgings, after a walk through the town, and make a sketch or two—one which struck a warmth into my heart, for it was an echo from the ‘Ould Counthry,’ a cabin picturesquely in want of repair, with piggery and everything complete. While I was sketching it, the owner came to the door, and leaned out, watching me while he smoked his cutty pipe. ‘Ye’re drawing me house, sure,’ observed he, with a pleased smile, and I knew that I had not been mistaken. It was Pat from over the sea, still unchanged by his surroundings.

Next morning I am roused by a fire-alarm sounding, so I jump up and have a wash and go out to see the country; then as I return to breakfast the church bells sound for morning prayer. How peaceful all this is, how delightful!

My landlady has as a pet an Australian magpie, who is a great speaker and a most adroit thief. She brings in breakfast, a dish of chops nicely done; but what a mound! She feels disappointed that I leave any, and thinks that I must be delicate; beef and mutton are so cheap in Australia.

Geelong has not much excitement or trade to stir it up, though it was busy enough during the gold-digging times. As Bonwick writes: ‘She is a beautiful but neglected child.’ It is built on the shores of Corio Bay (which has been com-



YARRA YARRA AND GEELONG

pared, and with justice, to the Bay of Naples for picturesque loveliness), and lies forty-five miles south-west from Melbourne; it has the credit of establishing the first woollen mill in Victoria, and has one of the largest tanneries—enough commercial honours for anything one-half so perfect.

I live a busy but ideal life here, sketching during the day Fyans Ford and the Moorabool Hills and valley, the Paper Mill and the river Barwon, the country beyond the Botanical Gardens, down by the Bay, and Geelong by day, sunrise, sunset, twilight, and moonlight; strolling down Moorabool Street and the market-place, looking at the Salvation Army marching by torchlight, listening to the beautiful chimes of St. Paul's, getting pastoral subjects at every turn—sheep coming along the road, with the shepherd on horseback. How I wish I could stay in Geelong for a month or two, watching the different lights playing over the You Yangs; but I am like the wandering Jew and must go on—on for ever.

My time has come. My friend has called.

We go by train to Camperdown, where I meet the genial old James Dawson, the friend and mourner of the aboriginal, and author of an exhaustive book on the habits of the primitive man. Here I go over his station, Renny Hill, and examine the pictures of his son-in-law, Mr. Taylor, who hides some gems here in the bush. He has an original portrait of Robert Burns, by Taylor, an ancestor of my kindly host. Here the poet is depicted shortly before he died—a much more realistic likeness than any which I have ever before seen; he looks like the burly farmer which he was and must have been. There is also a Borgia, a 'Sleeping Jesus' by Murillo, 'Holy Family' by Correggio, and many other masterpieces, which the Melbourne Gallery ought to have to enrich it, and may have some day.

James Dawson is one of the grand old men who are always boyish and young in heart and light of step. His daughter and he lived in close friendship with the natives of Western Victoria, and learnt their language and habits; and I think there is no man alive who can tell more about them, or who admires them more.

We had a long and interesting talk about them, or rather

what they were, for the tombstone of the last survivor has lately been put up at Camperdown.

He reckons the tribes of the Western Districts to have numbered 21, with 30 fighting men in each tribe, and 90 old men, women, and children; so that when they all assembled they numbered 2,520, including 630 fighting men; but in 1880 they had diminished to 14. Now they are totally extinct. The chiefs were regarded with the greatest veneration, and when a father died his land was divided with his wife and children of both sexes. Their laws of marriage are most wonderful, and, from a natural point of view, far-seeing, with, of course, as in all natural laws, little room left for the emotions, marriage being strictly forbidden where even the most distant traces of consanguinity existed. The punishment of offending these laws was death to both parties. For instance, 'The laws of the aborigines forbid a man marrying into his mother's, or even grandmother's, tribe, into any adjoining tribe, or one that speaks his own dialect.' But they make no objections to a man marrying his deceased wife's sister, provided he has either divorced or *killed* his wife first; while the law, like that of the Jewish code, insists that when a married man dies and leaves a family behind him, his brother must marry the widow and rear up the children.

They must have '*wambepan tuuram*,' or '*fresh flesh*,' in all their marriages, so that they have very often to travel far afield for their brides. The Western tribes have a legend that their original progenitor was by descent a *Kuurokutch*, or long-billed cockatoo; his wife was a *Kappa-heear*, or Banksian cockatoo; they had many sons and daughters, who were regarded as *Kappatch* and *Kappaheear*, so could not marry together; therefore they went amongst the pelicans, snakes, and quails for husbands and wives, which, together with those of their first parents, form the five maternal classes of the Western district.

Illegitimacy was rare amongst the aborigines themselves until the Europeans contaminated them, and the frail sinner and her child were put to death and burnt when such did occur. The father was also punished with the greatest severity, and often killed as well as the woman; so

that such dire consequences made even the fondest Romeos and Juliets pause for consideration before they yielded to over-ardent affection.

Their manner of courting was a little singular, and more forcible than refined, the main point being to teach the wives obedience to their future lords ; but before the young men are able to choose a wife they have to go through the mysteries of *Katnutch*, or manhood, an institution which is so severe that few of the delicate youths ever survived it. Mr. Dawson thinks it was originally designed to get rid of the weakly members of the tribe.

The ' Corroborees ' are where the young men select their wives, and the consent of the young ladies is seldom asked. If one objects, and runs away, then her husband can go after and kill her ; so that it is not often that a wife objects to the man her father picks out for her.

The chief is the best off in this, as in all other matters, for the young men have to ask his consent to their marriage, which asking very often ends in the great man, if she suits his own taste, settling the question by taking the woman himself ; so that the youths have to go and ' look out ' once more for something not so tempting, while the old warrior takes to himself the finest young women he can get, and as many of them as he likes.

It is a great mistake to say that the aborigines have no creed ; they are profound believers in the supernatural.

' Pirumeheal ' is the good spirit ; a gigantic fellow, who lives above the clouds, very harmless and benevolent. The thunder is his voice, and they always listen to it with pleasure and respect. He sends the rain, which is their greatest boon in this thirsty land.

' Muuruup,' or ' Wambem-neung-been-been-aa,' the ' Maker of bad-smelling smoke,' is the evil deity, and author of every misfortune ; he comes in the lightning, and destroys the trees, and kills the people and eats their children. The owl is his special messenger, tout and spy, so that they abhor this bird of evil omen. Muuruup lives below the ground, in a place all fire, and has a number of evil spirits under his command. The man in the moon is also a devil.

They believe strongly in wraiths, ghosts, male and female devils, and witches. When any one dies his ghost haunts the earth, and, although considered harmless, is regarded with great fear. Every native has a wraith, which only appears to him before his death.

They have their own superstitious ideas of animals also: the grey bandicoot is woman's food, and no male will eat it; the common bat belongs to the men, who try to protect it in every way; a porcupine ant-eater near a camp is a sign of death to someone there.

Strange spears and weapons are very reluctantly touched, as it is believed that they may cause sickness and death. They also believe that if an enemy gets possession of any article which has belonged to them, he will be able to use it as a charm against them; therefore they are very careful when shifting their camps to burn every shred belonging to them which they do not require.

Every tribe has its own doctor, in whose skill great confidence is reposed in times of sickness. When death overtakes them, the body is bound with the knees up to the chest, tied up with an acacia-bark cord in an opossum rug, and buried two feet deep (if the ground is soft enough to dig a grave), with the head towards the rising sun; if the ground is hard, the body is placed on a bier and removed to the distance of a mile or two from the camp. There the relations prepare a funeral pyre, on which the body is placed, with the head towards the east. Two male relations then set fire to the pyre, and remain until the body is consumed, scattering the ashes about.

Their corroborees, or great meetings, are mostly held between sunset and sunrise; this also is the favourite time for battles. Their signal for gathering is made by setting fire to a wide circle of long grass, which causes the signal smoke to rise in a remarkably spiral form, which is seen from a great distance and always answered.

Each tribe on arrival at the appointed spot raises the 'Wuuries' or sheds, and lights its fire in front of them on the side next their own country; and when all are assembled the different chiefs walk along, tapping each

member on the head with a piece of bark, asking his name, his tribe's, and his class. After this they make a wide circle, and the chiefs alone discuss matters inside, the others remaining seated around.

For war purposes, when help is required, the chief sends two messengers through the friendly tribes with message-sticks. These sticks are pieces of wood about six inches long and one inch in diameter, with five or six sides, one of these indicating by notches the number of tribes required, and the others the number of men required from each. When the nearest tribe gets this message the chief decides who are to go, and then forwards the stick to his next neighbour, and so on until all are summoned.

Persons accused of wrong-doing are summoned by a month's notice to appear before the assembled tribes, at risk of being outlawed and killed.

The offender goes to the meeting armed with two war-spears, a light shield, and his boomerang. If it be a private wrong he is painted white, and, along with his friend or second, placed opposite his accusers. These range themselves at about fifty yards distance, and throw four or five gnurin spears and two boomerangs a-piece at him, all together, like a shower. If he manages to ward them off without getting wounded his second hands him a heavy shield and he is attacked singly by his enemies, who each deliver one blow with a 'liangle,' as blood must be spilt. It ends in his being hit, after which they all shake hands, dress his wounds, and make friends.

Tribal quarrels are sometimes settled by single combat, sometimes they take the form of a tournament.

This information, of course, I gleaned from my friend Mr. James Dawson. It mainly characterised the Western tribes of Victoria, who are now extinct, but amongst whom he and his gifted daughter so long sojourned; yet, from what I learnt of other tribes, the aborigine is pretty much the same all over Australia.

He has many curious anecdotes to tell about their habits, humour, and superstition, as might be expected, three of which I must give as examples of the intelligence of this commonly despised race.

The First Formation of Water-holes.

One very dry season, when there was no water in all the country, and all the animals were perishing of thirst, a magpie, a lark, and a gigantic crane consulted together. They could not understand how it was that a turkey-bustard of their acquaintance was never thirsty, and, knowing that he would not tell them where his supply of water was obtained from, they resolved to watch and find out where he drank. They flew high into the air, and saw him go to a flat stone. Before lifting the stone the turkey, afraid of his treasure being discovered, looked up, and saw the three birds; but they were so high and kept so steady that he took them for small clouds. He lifted the stone, therefore, and drank from a spring running out of a cleft in a rock. When he replaced the stone and flew away the three spies came down and removed it and took a drink and a bath, remarking, '*King gnakko gnal*'—'we have done him.' They flapped their wings with joy, and the water rose till it formed a lake. They then flew all over the parched country, flapping their wings and forming water-holes, which have been drinking-places ever since.

The Ghost.

A man, travelling in the country of a friendly tribe, came upon a deserted habitation. Above the doorway he saw the usual crooked stick, pointing in the direction which the family had taken, and all round about the place pieces of bark covered with white clay, indicating a death. He found tracks leading to a tree, in which he soon discovered a dead body. Anxious to know who had died, he laid down his rug and weapons at the foot of the tree and ascended it. On removing the opossum rug from the face he found that it was a friend. He wept for a long time, then came down and went away; but he had not gone far before he heard some magpies making a great noise, as though they saw something strange. He turned about to see what it was, and, to his horror and amazement, saw the

ghost of the deceased man come down and follow him. He became so terrified that he could not move, and, addressing it, said, 'Why do you frighten me, when I have come to see you, and never did you any harm?' It never spoke, but followed him for a considerable distance, scratching his back meanwhile with its nails, and then returned to the tree. When he reached his friends he told them what had happened and showed them his back, lacerated and bleeding, and said that he had a presentiment that something bad would befall him before long. At the next meeting of the tribes he was speared through the heart.

The Meteor.

On one occasion (a friend of Dawson's tells this tale), having tried in vain to get an old man—known about Camperdown as Doctor George—to understand something about the Christian religion, I turned the conversation to the subject of a large meteor which had appeared a few months previously, and asked him if he had seen it. After a little time he caught my meaning, and said, 'Yes, me see him, like it fire; him go to—to—'—pointing with his finger its path along the sky. I asked him what he thought it was. He answered, carelessly, 'Borak me know'; then, suddenly brightening up, and putting on a sly, grave countenance, he said, 'Me think great big Master'—pointing to the sky—'want smoke Him pipe; Him strike Him match'—suiting the action to the words—'and puff-puff'—pretending to smoke. Then he made a movement as though he slowly dropped a match through the air. The comical assumption of gravity with which this was said, and the quickness with which the impromptu explanation was invented, showed that if he did not understand my religious teaching, it was certainly not from lack of intelligence.

CHAPTER XIII

NATIVE NAMES OF PLACES

Western District—Camperdown, and Landscape round—Thompson's Mad Bull—Drive to Lara—A Victorian Station—Mount Elephant.

I SHALL not soon forget the pleasant time I had with this genial Victorian squatter. It cheered me upon many a mile of my travelling.

'Why do you call this place Camperdown?' I asked him; for the fact that the land must have had characteristic native names and the incongruity of such a name for such a district struck me forcibly, when they had so much originality to pick and choose from.

'Why?' I had hit my friend in a sore place, for his bright blue eyes blazed out with wrath as he answered: 'Why are all our finest and most poetic native names turned into meaningless English ones? Because some idiot is appointed by Government to rush over the country and give names to places already named properly. The fellow who called our town Camperdown came here in a hurry, pulled out his Bradshaw, and on the first page he opened at random was Camperdown, so he straightway christened it, without rhyme or reason, by that name. And would you believe it, the native name of the township is "Warrnatts." M'Arthur's hill over there is called "Meenin'gnurt." That point of land over there on Lake Bullen Merri is called "Wuurna-wee-wheetch," or the "Home of the Swallow"; the country is called "Kirk maêring," "Place of Wild Dogs." There are a hundred good titles to pick and choose from—names which signify something—and yet they say Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and Camperdown, to confuse the traveller and general reader with old names which have neither euphony nor meaning.'

I could not help agreeing with my friend in the spirit of his complaint, for this hideous, or commonplace naming of colonial places is one of the few shortcomings which always jars upon my nerves—this and the 'ringing' and destroying of the gum trees by the settlers.

Before the European ever came to Australia every point, lake, and piece of land had its native title, both suggestive and poetic, as : *Tarnpirr*, or 'Flowing water,' which is now known as Taylor's Creek ; *Djerinallum*, or 'Sea Swallow,' instead of Mount Elephant. Certainly Elephant is a most appropriate name for this mountain, as one may see from the sketch ; but, of course, the natives have no name for this animal, as it is unknown to them. *Tung'ung brumart*, or 'Eels which Bite the Stones,' instead of the Falls of the Hopkins, where a large number of eels are ; &c.

It is too late to alter all these names on the map at this time of day, as it is too late to save those vast forests which have been destroyed ; yet I hope some colonial writer may think it worth while to go over the land, and where possible collect the original names of places, so that future generations may be able to see what their fathers missed. I yet hope that the eucalyptus will be regarded as the best tree for colonial parks and avenues, and as one of the most wonderful and perfect trees in the world, something to be justly proud of, and that songs and poems may yet be written and sung about its manifold virtues and disregarded beauties. To me it is the only mighty symbol of the perfect union and ideal marriage, as the bull was the perfection of life to the Assyrians, and the joined serpent with the Egyptians the sign of eternal wisdom and unity ; so the gum tree must ever represent to those who understand its botanical mysteries, omnipotent, all-sufficing, and perfect love, the eternal unity of soul.

Camperdown, a very flourishing market-town, the capital of the chief grazing district of Victoria, nestling at the foot of Mount Leura, and on the main road to Warrnambool from Geelong, is very cleanly, quaint, and sedate, excepting during sheep-shearing season, when it is lively enough.

An aristocratic little town also, supported as it is by the squatter princes of this locality. They are all Conservatives in the Western District, and believe strongly in baronial rights. All round, for one or two hundred miles, the land is flat, rich, and grass-covered—great plains of rolling grasses, with here and there a lake or salt marsh, or a volcanic

mountain starting abruptly from the level ground, like an island upon a green ocean.

I made sketches from Rennie Hill of Lake Bullen-Merri, and Mount Noorat, a deep lake with tree-covered hills all about and thick bush between. I also made copies of drawings of Mount Brie-brie, or 'Abrupt,' and Tower Hill Lake, Warrnambool, as I could not go so far west with the limited time at my disposal.

After this I walked about the country, getting extensive reaches of landscape from the Royal Park. Mountains and lakes under a sunny sky, with shadows from the clouds overhead, and foregrounds of woodland, almost English in their characteristics. From the hilltop outside the Botanical Gardens I looked over seventy miles of country, taking in the Grampians and Pyrenees, Mounts Abrupt, Elephant, the Two Cloven Hills, Meningort, Shadwell, and Noorat with three lakes: Gnotuk, Colongulac and Bookar, as lovely an effect as any painter could desire. Gnotuk was in shadow and dark, while the other two glistened like silver in the sunlight, with lap beyond lap of forest or isolated tree-clumps, and over it all a solitary vulture lazily sailing along with almost motionless wings.

Coming back to Camperdown I took a short cut through what looked like a gentleman's park at home. I vaulted over the fence, and was very soon tempted to get out my materials and spread my camp-stool, it was so sylvan, just like a picture by Constable or Gainsborough. Even the bovine interest was not lacking, for there the oxen grazed beneath the spreading trees—a peaceful scene, which calmed me while I sat and made my sketch.

One sulky-looking bull came slowly over from the herd towards me, but stopped short a little distance away, and after gazing upon me for some minutes with stupid curiosity sauntered back to his cows.

After I had finished I crossed the park, and seeing a little fellow standing, in white shirt and trousers, trailing his coat in the dust by the sleeves, I asked him if I was going right for the town. He was a very small boy of about six or seven, with solemn blue eyes, but he answered promptly enough, and directed me all right; after which I thanked him

and was going on, when he stopped me by bawling after me: 'I say, mate, you may thank your blessed stars that you got out of that paddock all right!'

'How is that, my boy?' I inquired, turning round.

'Because that was Mr. Thompson's mad bull who came up and looked at you, and I was just standing here and watching to see how long he was going to let you sit on that stool of yours. He nearly killed father's help last week, and he wasn't half as close to him as you were.'

There was a ring of disappointment in this bright little boy's voice as he told me of my narrow escape which interested me.

'So you were watching me, were you?'

'Yes, I thought there would be some fun, only it didn't come off.'

'That was a pity, wasn't it?'

'Oh no, someone else may come along presently, and then he may not be so quiet. I am the blacksmith's son, and live close by, so I can easily wait a bit and see if any one else is coming.'

'You are a very nice boy!' I said, as I chucked him under the chin and went on my way, thinking what a blissful state ignorance is sometimes. I had managed to secure my sketch without overmuch disappointing my tiny colonial. As I looked back I saw him still standing on the safe side of the fence, waving his coat in the direction of Mr. Thompson's mad bull.

We drove to Lara, the station of Mr. John Lang Currie, which I may take as a fairly representative Victorian squatter's station, so I may as well describe it in passing.

Mr. Currie, like Mr. Dawson, is a Victorian of the genuine old stamp, with an intense love and pride of his adopted land. He is one of the few men who believe in the gum tree, and has planted a perfect forest of blue gums round his homestead, which give to it a secluded aspect and hide its magnificence; for the house has been built after the design of Sir Walter Scott's house at Melrose—Abbotsford—in blue stone, and cost over 30,000*l.* to build. To give an idea of how the gum tree grows, he showed me some

which he had planted in 1851, and which have grown to a height of 150 feet, with nearly eleven feet of circumference.

Lara has all the modern improvements about it in the way of wool-sheds, sheep-pens, washing-ponds, &c. Mr. Currie is a wealthy man, owns a very large run of grazing land here—ground where you may dig ten or twelve feet down and still find rich loam; he has other sheep-runs and stations in different parts of the colony, but this estate of Lara in extent is larger than many of our English ducal domains. I suppose in the future that his descendants will become dukes and princes also, if Australia does not adopt democracy and abolish titles; at any rate they will have a better right to their lands, seeing that they have purchased instead of stealing them direct. This, perhaps, may go against them if ever they *condescend* to apply for patents of nobility.

After going through the different departments and hearing him describe all the different processes of shearing, pressing, packing, and transporting the wool, we drove over the country to Mount Elephant, which is partly his property, and peculiar as being the youngest extinct volcano in the world. We struggled together up the sides amongst the cinders, lava, and pumice stones, to the top, where a magnificent view of the Western District could be obtained.

As we approached the mountain I saw why it had been named Elephant, and noticed that the resemblance to this animal was perfect. It looked like an elephant couchant, indentations of the mountain showing the large flapping ear, slanting head, small eyes, and the trunk extended along the plain. It is wonderful how Nature at times plays the part of Titan sculptor, and carves colossal statues of animated objects.

It was a stiff climb up to the top, but when there the view was well worth the exertion. What a vista opened up before us!

Beneath our feet, on the one side, the crater, a vast basin, grass-covered and dotted with dwarfed she-oak trees, standing and lying amongst the boulders.

As I looked into it, like a perfect cup, a thought struck

me, 'What a splendid reservoir you have here, Mr. Currie! If you could only cement that cavity, roof it over with an inverted roofing, to protect it from the sun, leaving a hole in the centre, and so preserve all the rains which fall during the wet season, why you could supply the whole district with water, and never run short.'

I made this suggestion to a man who could easily afford to spend a hundred thousand on such a scheme; it would have been Utopian to ordinary squatters. The very air and superb scenery invigorated my brains, and I grew wilder: 'Or why wait for rain when you can command it from those bulging clouds floating over the land constantly from ocean to ocean; get great charges of dynamite and make explosions until your gigantic tank is full up, burst the clouds and get all their contents whenever you want water.'

The great conundrum of the colonies was solved. Mr. Currie smiled at my words in an indulgent way, for he had appreciated the manner in which I had shown my colonial experience, by jumping down during our drive and lifting the bars of fences, and was inclined to endure with patience even poetry from me on this Pisgah.

What a panorama spread under us as we looked through the curved she-oak framework of the crater: a vast plain of waving grass, ninety miles in extent, with the little township of Derrinallum lying like an oasis in the middle of a great desert—white specks denoted numberless flocks of sheep; Lakes Toolenack and Corogamite, both bitter as the Dead Sea, and glistening whitely in the hot sun; a delicious play of colours over the plain—purples, reds, yellows, interspersed with living green patches; there lay Warren Hill and Mount Cole, also Lake Logan, with the dried, snow-like brine, and away in the far-off distance, nearly a hundred miles from us, the Victoria Ranges and Mountains of Ararat trembling in the limpid ether, like those delicate washes of the Master, Turner.

I looked hungrily over it all, as Moses might have looked over the forbidden land. I, the needy writer and artist, standing looking over the possessions of my kindly host the millionaire. I sent out my soul in a heavy sigh, and then turned from that glorious vision to peer into the deep

shadows of the crater under my feet, and remember that I had to hurry away.

I was roused from my reverie by the agonised yelping of my host's little terrier, who had been pursuing a rabbit over the other side of the mountain. Overhead careered a huge eagle, who was coming nearer the dog every wide circle he made; we could not see the dog, but from his horrified yelpings we knew that he saw his enemy.

At this moment a shot rang out, and the king of birds darted up towards the blue vault without his victim. 'Sandy,' the terrier, was saved, and shortly afterwards joined us, in a state of abject humility, with his saviour, one of the rabbit-hunters, gun on shoulder.

'A bad shot, sir,' he observed as we met; 'but it served its purpose.'

CHAPTER XIV

WESTERN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA

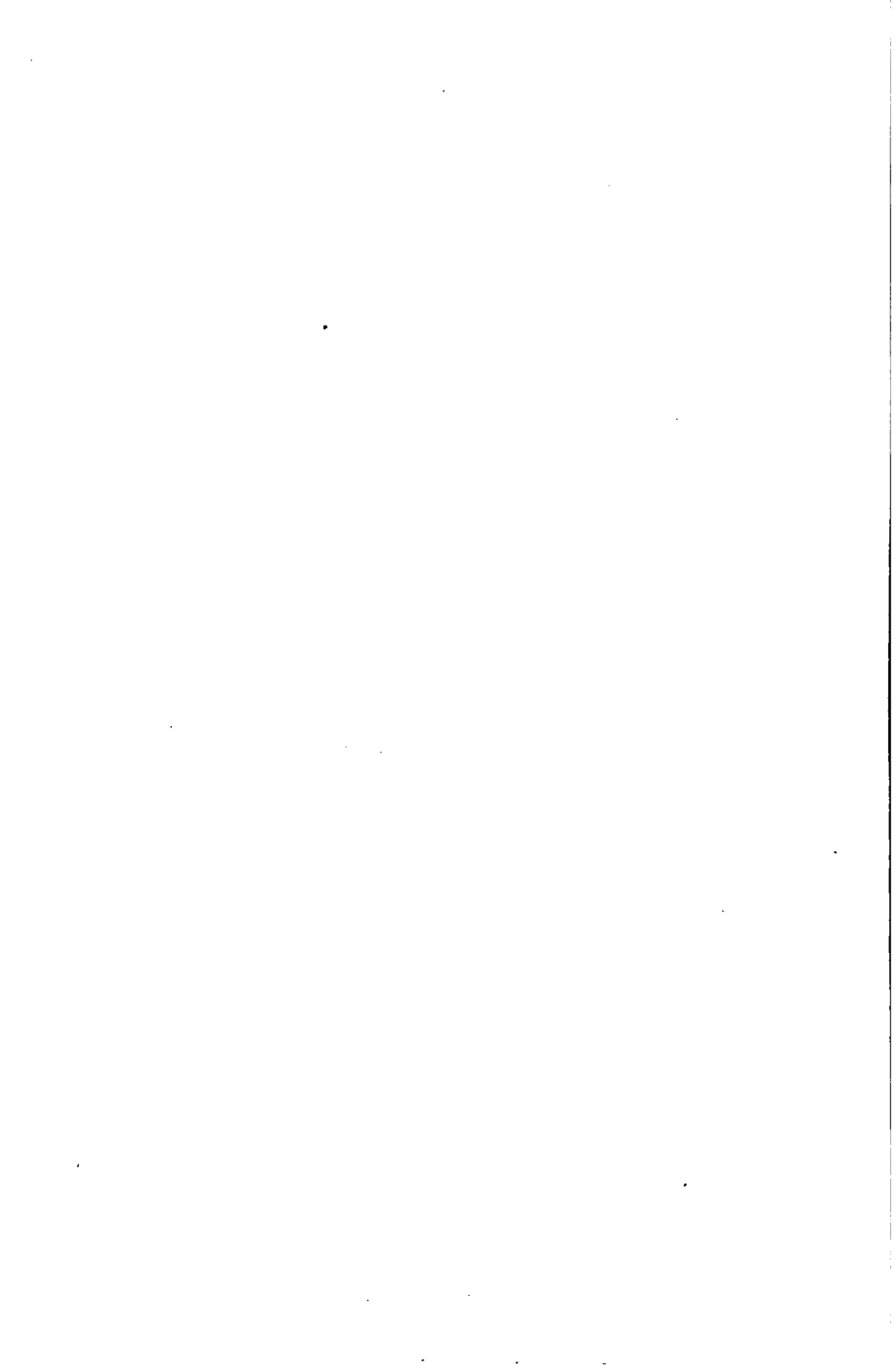
Birregurra and Colac—A Drive to Lorne—Black and Tiger Snakes—
Walk through Cape Otway Forest.

THEY say that all good Americans when they die go to Paris. I fondly trust, if I am good enough in this life, after I pass away (for I have almost relinquished the hope during life) that I may be allowed to haunt Birregurra.

'Don't bother about Birregurra,' my friends said; 'spend what time you may have at Colac, which is worth a visit. See its Free Library and Town-hall, the rabbit-preserving factory, and the house of the man who introduced these interesting specimens into Victoria.' It is the habit of pious Moslems to turn towards Mecca when they mutter their prayers; in Victoria it is the custom of all true squatters to turn towards this unpretentious building when they mutter their prayers—and fervent prayers they are, too. 'See the bacon-curing, salt-works and fruit-preserving factories, and our grand freshwater lake, Colac, which is



BUSH FIRE



nearly 7,000 acres in extent, and delicious water; don't miss that by any means.'

I didn't miss Colac, or its lake; but though I hurried over it I made my sketches conscientiously. Somehow, Birregurra had got hold of my imagination by some occult power, and I felt feverish until I had deposited my sketching-bag and minute bundle of change of flannels in the sweetly pure bedroom assigned for my use by Mrs. Pengilly, Royal Mail Hotel, Birregurra. I had reached my well in the wilderness. I looked round, and felt balmy peace at last steal over me.

Birregurra is not yet a town. It is ten thousand times better—it is the most perfect sylvan village in the whole of Victoria, built as it is on the banks of the Barwon River, surrounded by gentle hills and valleys, all deliciously wooded; and the inhabitants are as nice as the place is beautiful.

From here the tourist can get to Lorne or Cape Otway. He will pass through the great forest of Otway, and get glimpses of ranges, gulleys, fern-trees, and gigantic old gums, such as he can never wipe from the slate of his memory.

I spent two days, early and late, going round the neighbourhood of this heart-solacing village. There was a bush-fire burning in the forest at the time. It had started hereabouts, so that in portions it did not appear at its best, with the blackened, gaunt trunks in air, and smouldering ashes under foot. Still, there were patches which the flames had passed over, and where Nature was prodigal in her display of original gardening.

At nights we saw the red reflection of the blazing forest, and here and there jets of lurid flame bursting out at unexpected places, while all the air was ambrosial with the pungent odour of burning gum-leaves.

I believe it is the duty of everyone who sees a rabbit or a snake to kill them, if possible, and I have been told that one can be punished for wantonly allowing any of the pests to escape. Let me confess it, now that I am beyond the reach of the Victorian laws, I could not make up my mind to disturb those happy and innocent-looking families, which gathered each night and morning so unsuspectingly on the

banks of the Barwon, as I sat sketching amongst the ferns and the wild flowers.

They have the colour and general appearance of our wild rabbits, only they are about three times the size ; while they are so daring and tame that one hardly requires traps to snare them—they almost wait to be lifted up, and either petted or knocked on the neck. Competition, I suppose, makes them reckless. As I sat quietly amongst them, they came out of their holes by thousands, sat up on their hind legs, and washed their faces like tame cats. The entire bank appeared to be covered with them ; so that when I made a movement, and they for a moment scurried off, it seemed as if the ground was animated, and rushing away from me. No man need starve in the bush, for he has only to sit for a few moments still, and his supper or breakfast will jump into his arms.

What a massacre goes on amongst these mischievous innocents to supply the factory at Colac, without making any decrease in their numbers ! The Government gives sixpence per tail for every one that is brought to them, and the hunter must be very indolent who cannot snare his hundred or two per day ; I think he gets another sixpence for the body from the factory : so that, while bunnies swarm in the Colony, if a man chooses to walk about the streets of the towns in rags, it is his own fault entirely, not the fault of the country.

While the earth is so well plenished with animated Nature, the trees about this part literally cluster with cockatoos and parrots. How they chatter and scream, as they fly about in dense clouds from branch to branch ! The parrots and parrakeets dash about in a disconnected way, flashing their gay colours in the sunlight, while the cockatoos soar like a regiment of white-uniformed soldiers in a compact British square.

‘Mountjoy’ is the man who takes me from Birregurra to Lorne. His coaches are one of the institutions of the district. His sons—fine young men—are the boldest and wildest drivers in existence, so that the drive to Mountjoy’s Hotel passes like a delirium of excitement and pleasure. Our driver cracks his whip as the jolly ‘Wellers’ of the

past must have done, and his team of well-groomed horses are off with a plunge, leaving a whirlwind of dust behind them.

On, on at full speed through the main street of Birregurra, over the Barwon, along the wooded country to Dean's Marsh, getting flying views of dead trees, upstarting grim and ghastly, white and jet black, and spreading their stark branches in every direction where man has killed them, or the fires have passed amongst them, shrivelling the life out of them, and leaving them standing like spectres of winter in a summer land.

I sit on the front seat, beside young Mountjoy, and listen to his descriptions and names of places as we pass. He is strongly interested in the wild strokes I am making in my sketch-book, and offers sometimes to slacken pace or stop so that I may have more time. But I say, 'No, go on full speed,' as my pencil is doing; for I have accustomed myself to taking sketches from the windows of express trains, and a stage-coach, even under the guidance of Mountjoy, is leisure to that.

We stop to take dinner at the half-way house—'Dean's Marsh'—and wash the dust out of our throats with the colonial beverage, 'tea,' and then we are off once more with fresh horses—this time all up hill—and into the forest, with all the solemnity of forest scenery upon us.

Up, up—we are almost walking now, for it is stiff work for the horses. Great trees which almost meet over our heads, with that red, dust-laden bush-road beneath, and every now and then a glance into a mighty fern-tree gulley, with delicious blue, trembling distances beyond.

Now it is Colac, and Camperdown, with the lakes and mountains of Buninyong and You Yangs beyond. Purple ranges, sometimes sombre, sometimes glittering with sunshine, for the sky above is diversified with summer clouds, snow-white, with velvety shadow sides, through which the sunbeams drift from valley to mountain, every instant changing in effect.

We have gained the top of the range, and now prepare to descend. A few minutes of breathing-time, and then, once more, with a flick over the ears of the leader, we dash

down pell-mell, like the style in which we used to imagine Jehu dashed into Jericho, only, like many of our other early fallacies, we have found out that Jehu's driving was known principally from its military precision and sedateness. No matter; we drove as we used to suppose Jehu drove, with a rush, a hanging and mighty cloud of dust obscuring us, and making us all like red Indians, straight down the mountain, reckless of horses' knees or passengers' necks, right into Lorne, bringing up at the hotel with a magnificent flourish. How glad I feel now that I left my collars and neckties behind!

Mountjoy's Hotel, at Lorne, is arranged on the system of our Hydropathies at home—that is, the visitors are treated as guests, introduced all round, and expected to help to make things social. There were a considerable number of visitors the night I spent there, but I must say none of them showed by the slightest sign that I was the less welcome amongst them because of my bushranger- or sundowner-like get-up. Although I was the only person present who was not dressed in fashionable attire, they were all hearty and free, the young ladies particularly, who came over and examined my sketch-book with as much interest as if I had been the most exquisitely got-up young masher, with a well-known reputation for wealth, instead of the rough and shabby-looking globe-trotter that I am. This says more than seems at first sight for their sensible bringing up and the future of this independent colony.

Lorne is by the sea, in the centre of a crescent-shaped bay, with lofty ranges all round it, and bold headlands beyond. The Erskine River runs through it and into the sea.

There are curious rocks about this coast, some standing up like mushrooms on a large scale, some like strange monsters or animals.

I make a sketch of Eagle Point, with the wreck of the 'Sunrise' at my feet as a foreground. This ship had gone ashore on the sands, and all that now remained of it were the ribs, standing out of the surf and seaweed like the skeleton of some gigantic whale.

Here are to be found some of the most lovely-shaped

and tinted shells ; indeed, the shore glistens with the tender and prismatic hues of these shells. I could not resist wasting an hour picking up some of the beautiful specimens.

I also saw a most singular headland here—a projecting rock, which looked like the head of a harpy, with parrot-like, sharp nose, thin lips, and pointed chin ; even the cruel-looking eye was there ; and, what was most remarkable, the tracings of the rock formed what looked exactly like a transparent veil tightly drawn over half the face and nose. I got near it ; but the likeness was all the more striking the nearer one got—a perfectly-proportioned bit of Nature's carving on



The Veiled Harpy Rock. Horne
Victoria

a large scale, and one of the cruellest and most fatal faces I ever looked at. Finding that it hadn't a name, I called it 'The Veiled Fury,' as it would be to any luckless vessel which might be driven ashore on those flinty breasts during a storm.

This is a bad district for snakes. I went up the Erskine River to make some sketches of the picturesque turns and miniature waterfalls which greeted one at every little distance. While sitting quietly beside a deep brown pool, with a rock behind me, against which I leaned, I was startled by a slight flop almost at my feet, and raising my eyes saw a large

tiger-snake glide slowly and gracefully along the flat rocks towards the pool, into which he disappeared.

Another few minutes passed, when I saw another of the species slowly drop its limp length out of a hole almost over my head, and pursue the same even tenor of its way. I was growing nervous at the vicinity of such deadly neighbours, but wanted to finish my sketch, so hurried up. Again I was startled by a slight rustle, and to my horror observed a black snake about eight or nine feet in length glide between the legs of my camp-stool. It was too much; I leapt to my feet suddenly, with an exclamation which must have frightened the reptile very greatly, for with a lightning spring he flopped into the pool with a splash; I had been sitting so quietly that they had not noticed that I was an enemy. After that I got up, and folded my stool, leaving the one corner of my sketch to be finished from memory. The black and tiger snakes are nearly as venomous in their bite as the cobra.

Next morning I started to walk back through the forest. What a soul-inspiring walk that was, like passing through the pillars of some mighty cathedral, mile after mile and hour after hour, without meeting a soul, in an intense stillness only broken up now and again by the unearthly bursts of laughter from that useful friend of the settler, the Australian kingfisher and snake-exterminator, called the 'laughing jackass.'

Gum trees rising two hundred feet high, with boles in some places fifteen feet in diameter; straight trunks with the bark swinging from them in tattered shards, like the rags about a wind-battered scarecrow, spread out one behind the other like ivory pillars, and seemingly without a termination, while underneath the young wattles, acacias, and blue-gum shoots spring up, spreading out leaves all violet, like the bloom upon a ripe plum, and filling the forest with aromatic fragrance.

It was the coupling season with the snakes, when they are most daring and savage; so I took care, as I sat down to rest and draw, to beat the ground well, for they infest the Otway Forest. But the day passed without any exciting incident.

Then the evening fell, and I grew anxious to meet someone who might tell me how far off I was from Love's house, where I meant to pass the night.

A beautiful effect of sunset, the sky all ruddy and bronzy, lighting up the tops of the trees like red gold, while the under parts were in deep shadow; then the solemn afterglow, in which a reflected light came into the forest, making the ivory trunks gleam out like fleshly limbs, ghostly and weird. It seemed an enchanted forest.

As I trudged along, keeping well in the middle of the red bush-track—which I could just define from the dark green sides—partly as precaution against the snakes, who I knew took night for their courting, partly that I might not wander and get lost in the bush, I heard the clatter of horse's hoofs, and presently a rider loomed up.

'Did you see a couple of horses along this way?' he asked me; upon which I answered: 'Yes, they passed me during the afternoon, and must be near Lorne by this time.' Then I asked in turn: 'Am I right for Love's?'

'Yes, straight on about two miles farther;' and then he disappeared, and I went on my way.

This ghostly effect of afterglow changed to more direct twilight as the night advanced—a stormy twilight, with dark crimson clouds chasing one another over the upper space in wild confusion. About a mile beyond where I left the rider I heard the sound of axes upon trees, and soon came upon some woodmen felling the last tree for the night, their campfires blazing merrily, and their tents standing near; then another stiff mile of climbing, with the night upon the forest and the stars shining out between the clouds; over that black canopy; and next the lamp-lit window of Love's hut gleams in sight, and I drag myself wearily up to the door and claim shelter for the night.

CHAPTER XV

CAPE OTWAY FOREST

The Selector and his Family—All about Snakes—An Advice to Socialists—A Horrible Night—Mr. Milder of Geelong—Queenscliff and War Preparations.

MR. LOVE was not at home when I got there, but his wife and daughter received me hospitably, and shortly afterwards he came in to supper. I had passed him in the forest amongst the woodcutters, where his sons were then working and camping-out.

After supper, while we sat at the fire smoking our pipes, I asked him about the snakes and their habits.

‘Yes, they are bad about this quarter, particularly black and tiger snakes; and this is their worst time for biting, when they are coupling. They lie about the *middle of the roads* all through the night, rolling amongst the warm sand and dust, and that is where the danger lies principally to travellers.’

And I, once more, in my blessed ignorance, had taken the middle of the road for safety!

‘You’ll find them mostly twisted together like a double-snake walking-stick, with their heads quite close. When you disturb them they spring apart and go for you like lightning, for they are most active now, and extra savage; at other times they will try to get away if they can.’

‘Did you ever see a female snake swallowing her young?’

‘Yes, I think I have; at least, I have seen the mother open her mouth, and the young ones disappear; and I know a man who studies their habits, and he says they always do this when they fear danger. But, Lord bless you! we think nothing of snakes hereabout. We see too much of them; they are all over the place, and our pigs kill and eat them wholesale. Pigs are the very best snake-exterminators going; they grub them out, and bolt them down greedily. I don’t think that snake-poison hurts pigs: and as for us, the cure is quite simple—keep a sharp knife and a piece of

string always in your pocket, and if you are bitten just tie the string tightly round the part, and cut a chunk of flesh out, then suck the blood for a bit, and there is no fear.'

It sounded all so easy, with the exception of that 'chunk of flesh'—that was what struck me as the disagreeable part of the performance as I listened to his cure.

'My daughter there is nearly as good as a pig with the snakes; if she once gets a sight at them, they are gone snakes in no time. She likes hunting for them.'

I gazed at the young lady with intense admiration; she looked modest and pretty enough for anything, as she held down her head shyly at her parent's praises, while the fire-light played over her features, causing a rosy blush.

'We don't always object to snakes either, for they are capital micers and vermin-destroyers. Now, we have a big black snake which lives somewhere about the shingles, and who goes all over the house, after we get to bed, hunting the mice and rats; you may happen to hear him to-night, if he isn't out coupling.'

What a sweetly pleasant prospect that was! I remembered how fond snakes are of heat, and how they sometimes like to get into bed with people that are asleep. Although I made no remark, I felt no undue haste to go to bed, tired though I was with my long tramp. I wasn't quite so used to snakes as the fair young lady opposite.

Then we began to talk about himself and his bush-farm, for he was a selector.

'The Government will not sell the land outright, which is good for people not too well off. They sell ground here at 1*l.* per acre on a twenty years' purchase contract; we pay 1*s.* per acre for twenty years, and then it is ours, with 5*l.* or 6*l.* for the surveyor's fees for coming to peg it out—quite easy terms, which need not hurt any one; only the condition is that we occupy and improve the ground during the twenty years. I have been here for six years, and have cleared enough in that time to be able to live on it. In ten years' time I can put money in the bank, and by the time the land is our own I expect that we shall be flourishing, for it is splendid land, and I have as much of it as many of our nobility at home.'

‘But meanwhile, Mr. Love?’

‘My sons and I take jobs for Government, making roads, as most of the selectors do; that’s what they are up to now. Half a dozen selectors are in the gang down there, felling the trees and sorting the roads along with my sons. We can make enough by contract-work, in a couple of months per year, to buy seed, and we spend the rest of the time at our own property.’

Democrats of England! Socialists! Has it ever occurred to you that whilst you are fighting the landowners in that little paddock of meagre, starved-out soil called Britain, that there are hundreds of thousands of acres lying fallow, ready for the axe, pickaxe, and spade, all over Australia—particularly in the northern portions of Queensland? Do you know that whilst you are thinking to solve the problem by raising the wages and forming unions of those men who, in spite of all your patriotic and benevolent efforts in their behalf, are starving in London, the Australian Government is only too ready to employ their labour in making roads and railroads, and is willing to grant them lordly heritages for their children on these beneficent terms?

I asked my host many other questions about a selector’s life; but at last I had to go to bed, for I could see he was dead-beat with sleep, and yawning horribly. The hostess and her daughter had long before retired to their rooms; so, taking my candle from him, I, with foreboding heart, shut myself in alone so far as humanity was concerned.

Was that accursed representative of the tempter of Mother Eve in possession of the apartment, and preparing for his nightly peregrinations? I wondered, as I held out the candle, and peered into the deep darkness, examining each portion of the floor before setting my foot down, and looking all round and under the bed carefully; but no glistening jetty yard or two of loathsomeness met my gaze. I took off the bedclothes and pillows to make sure that it was not coiled up amongst or under them; and then, with only a half-satisfied soul, I put my candle upon the table, undressed myself hastily, plunged into bed, and blew out the light.

How long I lay there shivering, anticipating horror, I

can hardly tell; but at last I must have dropped asleep, for I woke up all at once with a wild start and the instantaneous feeling that it was with me. In which part? In what frame of mind? Ye gods! ten ghosts at my bedside, all pointing fleshless fingers at me, and glaring out of phosphorescent but sightless eyeholes, would have been warmly welcomed rather than this silent horror.

I lay motionless, listening. It might be on the bed or under the pillow, or amongst my clothes on the chair, or ornamentally curled round my candlestick, just where a movement from me might excite it, and make it take the fatal leap. Again, awful thought! I had forgotten to put my matches on the table, and could not remember whether I had left them in the kitchen or put them into my pocket. The wild confusion of fear, speculation, and suspense was awful as I lay there, like an embalmed mummy, with strained ears and bristling hair.

At last I heard it, 'flop, slide, flop, flop!' and then a pause—to be again repeated at different parts of the room. It was hunting, I could hear, in the deep darkness, watching patiently for its victims, now and again making the leap, and landing on the floor, with the soft rebound and rustle of an indiarubber tube covered with silk.

Ah! those matches; where were they? Yet, even if they had been at hand, I dare not strike them, for it had the advantage of me, as it could see in the dark, and might be watching me as well as the other vermin (I could not regard myself in any other light, for I felt as meanly demoralised and fascinated as any miserable mouse or cockroach who then may have been crouching under the influence of those basilisk orbs).

So I lay, cold, clammy, and cramped, the shadow of death upon me, wondering how the young lady in the other room would have acted under the circumstance; thinking of the piece of cord, and the 'chunk of flesh' to be cut out promptly; feeling as if it had been extracted, now from my thigh or biceps, now from other parts—all tender parts of my composition; too fearful to move a finger, too much ashamed of my own blank cowardice to yell out for help, although the yell hovered on my lips, and had to be kept

back with a wild effort; knowing, at last, the sensations which men have felt whose hair has become bleached in an hour.

Was it an hour, or many, that I lay listening to those softly-caressing, silken floppings, with the long pauses between, before oblivion stole upon me? I don't know; but I only know that at last I drifted into unconsciousness of my misery, to wake up with the early light of morning stealing in and making objects discernible.

I woke lying on my back, and so the first spot I saw was a stain on the rafters directly above me—woke with my faculties all acute and memory active.

Had it gone, or where was it now? For a moment or two I lay motionless, not daring to shift even my head. To my imagination it seemed as if a light weight rested about the region of my stomach—the Devil's representative coiled up after its midnight amusement, on the coverlet. Slowly, cautiously, I turned my eyes down my nose, to find the view impeded by the blanket round my neck. Another moment of suspense. Then I raised my head from the neck only, and looked towards my toes; nothing there. I then turned my eyes to the outside, letting them range over all within vision; nothing yet. A little higher, and I could see portions of the floor; it was free. Then, with a sudden resolution, I made up my mind, and with an energetic effort gave one leap into the middle of the room which would have delighted the heart of a professional acrobat.

Daintily I approached the bed, my folded camp-stool in hand, and examined it all once again, as I had done the night before, without finding my room-fellow. Gingerly I handled each article of clothing, as I picked it up and shook it before putting it on, and not until I had left the house a hundred or so of yards behind me did I manage to shake off the horrors of the night and pull myself together.

'I hope you slept well last night,' observed my host when we met at breakfast.

'Splendidly,' I replied, cheerily.

'Did you hear the snake?' asked the young lady, looking up from her teacup.

'Yes, I fancied that I did hear something,' I replied, nonchalantly, as I went on calmly with my breakfast.

I spent some little time, before leaving Mr. Love, going over his estate, and looking at the improvements which he had made in six years—not a great deal to look at, for the gum-tree is a giant who cannot be cleared or cut down all at once. No saw can get through its vast circumference when full grown, and even if felled it would do more mischief by incumbering the ground than if left standing, so they ring it—i.e., cut the bark about a foot all round close to the root, and thus let it slowly die. A melancholy sight these giants are in their bleached ghastliness, standing up leafless, and throwing out great protesting, naked limbs. But if a man wants to cultivate his ground they must be sacrificed.

Yet the day is coming when the selector will be glad to farm these medicine-trees, instead of ringing them for less profitable crops. He will be glad to keep the forests as Nature has given them to him, and occupy himself with gathering the leaves and extracting the valuable juices from them. Then the selector will not have to wait his twenty years for prosperity, but will begin to put money in the bank the first month he occupies the land.

When a great gum-tree is killed, the selector lights a fire at its roots, and allows it to burn slowly away. This is how he clears his ground now. By-and-by they will be able to get large enough saws to cut the trees; then they can sell their spare timber for firewood, which will be a much more profitable game than digging for gold or coal in the bowels of the earth.

I went with Mr. Love through his fern-gulley, where a clear stream of water purred down. What a conservatory of loveliness that was, with those natural umbrellas rising over our heads, and making a perpetual twilight of cool greenery, with the rich lustre and sienna fronds and stumps, like our boyish visions of the Garden of Eden! What a paradise for the painter and poet this primæval forest is! There is nothing like it in our artificial, high-paid-for groves, grottoes, and fashionable conservatories—nothing like it in the tinsel world of civilisation. Here Nature has done her utmost in the way of beauty and repose.

After leaving Mr. Love, my road lay all downhill, so

that it was easy work, with a sunny day, and plenty of woodland effects every mile of the way.

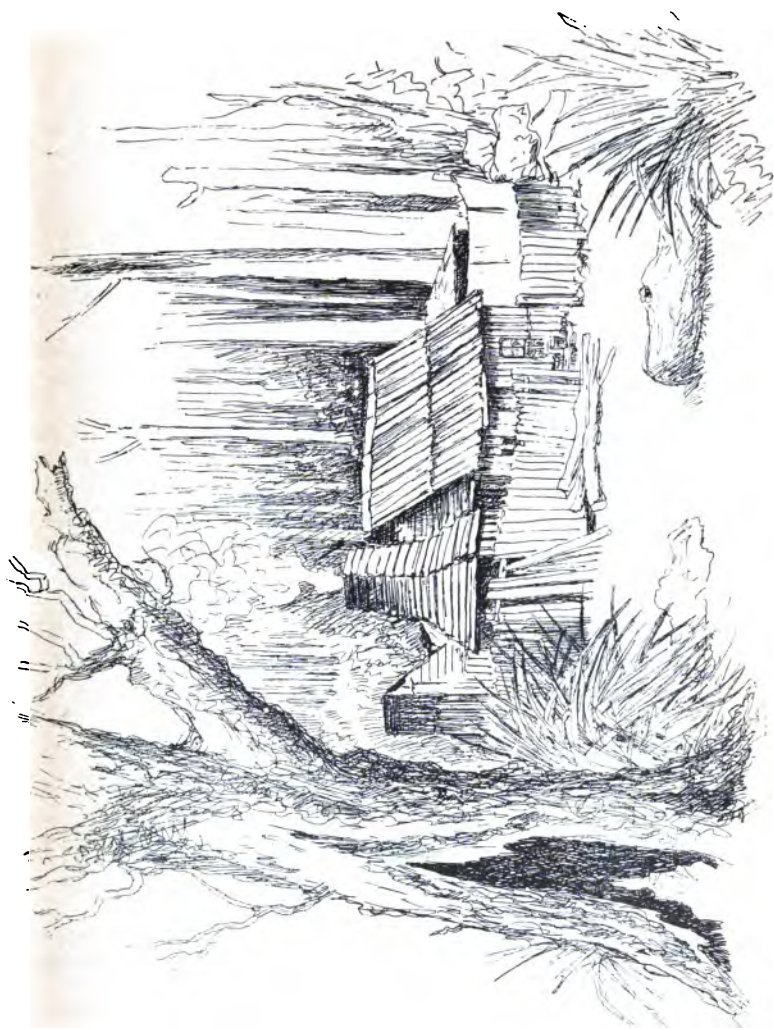
I was taking a rest and a sketch about half-way down, when two men came on the scene with fowling-pieces on their shoulders. They were a father and son, who had taken up a selection, and were out in the forest, hunting—rough-looking fellows, with clothes bepatched in a homely way, with patches of every known shade, which sight so gladdened my democratic soul that I hailed them, and made them sit down beside me and take part of the lunch which Mrs. Love had provided me with.

Then we got on the talk, and I found that my acquaintance was a Mr. Milder, of Geelong, a man of great refinement and taste—a good artist, a sweet musician, a naturalist, and now a selector, all for the love of the life. This is the sort of thing you experience in the Colonies constantly.

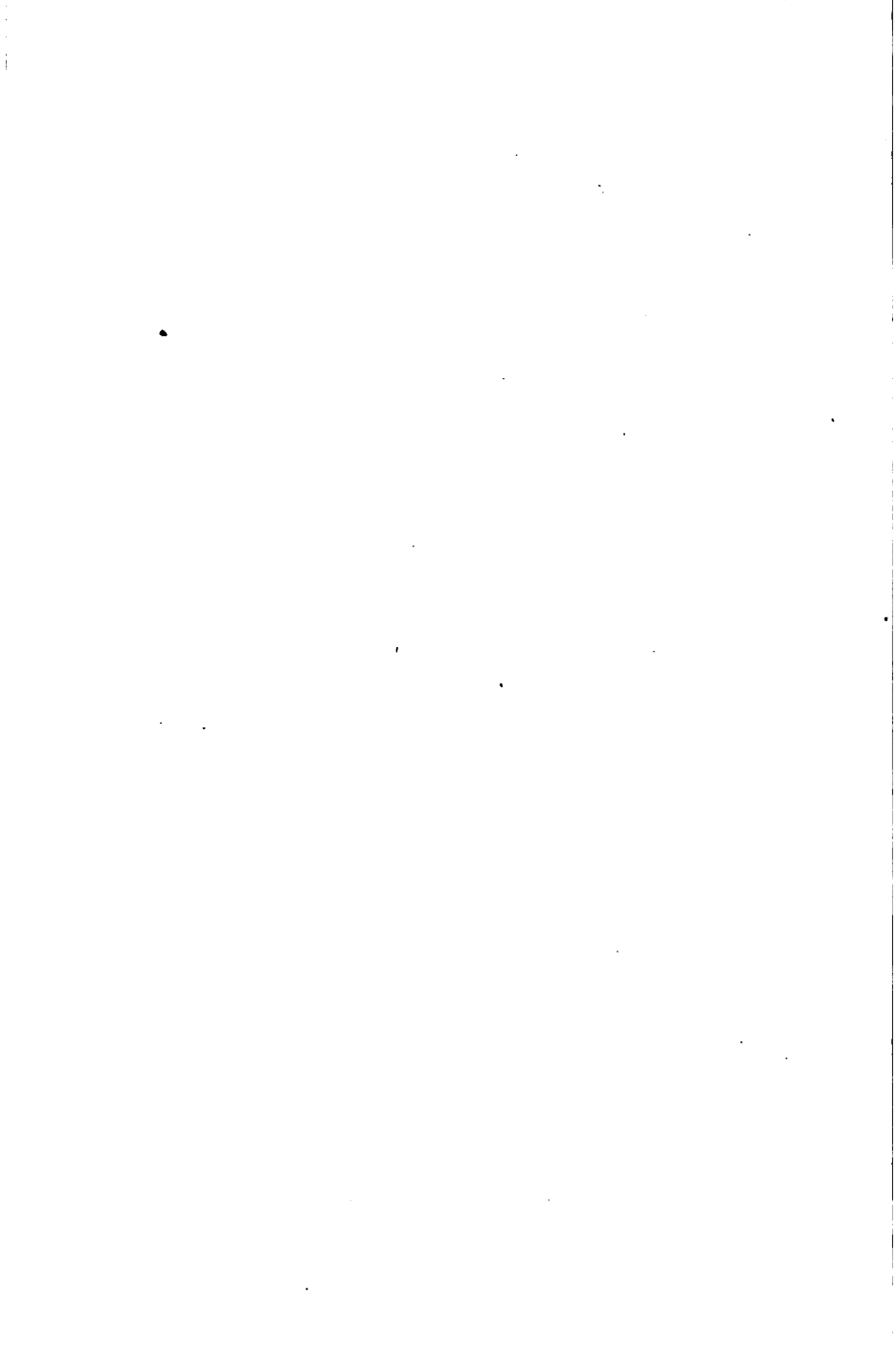
After our *al fresco* lunch Mr. Milder took me to his house and estate, and showed me over it. He also showed me his fine collection of stuffed Australian birds. Being an artist as well as a naturalist, he had stuffed these with a due regard to their characters and importance, so that the birds seemed to live once more on their branches. His tastes ran to orchard-growing, and he let metastase some of the first-fruits of his garden—for he was now in his fourth year as a selector—apples which melted in the mouth, with a fragrance and flavour unsurpassed. Who would not be a selector in Victoria, if his fate debarred him from becoming a squatter?

Before returning to Melbourne, previous to taking the New South Wales route *via* Ballarat and Deniliquin, I paid a visit from Geelong to Queenscliff, Port Phillip Heads, and the fortifications there. I went with Mr. Bell, the superintendent of the defence works, and viewed all their preparations for resisting a future enemy. I don't think any foreign power will be foolhardy enough to attack the Australian colonies, but it is best to be prepared.

And they are fully prepared in Victoria, with line within line of torpedoes. Woe to the unlucky warship which attempts to get inside Port Phillip Heads after war is declared. At Queenscliff they have a little office where a



A SELECTOR'S HUT



sedate man sits, like a telegraph-clerk, before a row of little ivory knobs on a table. Electric bells are placed in front of him as he sits, pensively, waiting.

The warship is telegraphed as within sight, and the gentle operator is all ready with his infernal instruments. A bell sounds—No. 1. The warship has just touched the connecting wire, and is passing over the first line of volcanic eruptions. The operator merely presses the knob of No. 1 on the table, and that is all he knows about it in the seclusion of his quiet little office. Outside the Heads, ten or twelve miles away, the invading warship is flying into thin air, a thousand splinters, with the hundreds of warlike spirits soaring to Hades.

Or, supposing the vessel clears the first line, and those aboard realise the danger they have passed as they see the ocean burst up behind them like a waterspout, there is no return for them. The quiet operator sits and listens for the next tinkle of the bell, with his forefinger on knob No. 2. If it sounds he is ready, and no steam can carry them over quick enough before they are blown up this time. Besides, he has a long row of figures and knobs before him to press down, if needful, for the protection of Port Phillip. And this is how science has advanced and modern warfare is conducted—one telegraph-operator against a whole Armada.

CHAPTER XVI

TOWARDS NEW SOUTH WALES

The Gold-yielding Districts—Ballarat—The Eureka Stockade—The Revolt of 1854—Mr. McIntyre's Theory of Gold—A Modern Representation of Jerusalem.

I took this route intending to go through the gold-digging districts to Deniliquin, Jerilderie, and Wagga Wagga, and so on towards Sydney; but I found at Deniliquin a telegram requesting me to return to Melbourne, and go to New

Zealand, so that I had to hurry through the places faster than I would like to have done otherwise.

I did not go to New Zealand, because of my letter, which I sent before me, asking if the rainy season, just commencing over there, had been taken into consideration. It had not, so that my original plans were allowed to be carried through (with slight interruptions)—to go northward, and so escape the rains of Australia. Having been before in the country, I had studied all these points particularly, so that no time would be wasted.

Ballarat, a native name signifying 'the place of rest,' is the leading gold-field of Victoria, and the next most important town after Melbourne. It was in 1851 that gold was first discovered here, at a spot called Golden Point, which caused a wild rush to be made from all parts of the Colony, and in a month's time it changed its quiet pastoral character to pandemonium, with over ten thousand diggers, of all classes of society, changed from peaceful settlers into fevered gnomes. Then came the finds at Mount Alexander and Bendigo. There were some very large nuggets found here—the 'Welcome Nugget,' 2,217 ounces, and 'The Welcome Stranger,' 2,280 ounces.

The Government sent to this new field their Commissioners, who exacted as a license-fee for each digger 30s. per month, which in two months time they doubled, in spite of the grumbling of the diggers at the exorbitant charges. The great and needless severity with which these charges were enforced afterwards produced consequences which will be ever memorable in the history of Victoria.

One night a digger called Scobie knocked roughly at the door of an hotel kept by one Bentley, at Ballarat; this was in 1854. Finding the place closed, he tried to force his way in, while Bentley, enraged, rushed out to fight him.

In the crowd and darkness Scobie was killed by a stroke of a spade. Although no one could swear to the murderer, Bentley was arrested and tried, but afterwards acquitted by the police-magistrate, Mr. Dewes, who was said to be, secretly, his partner in business.

The other diggers, savage at the unpunished murder of their companion, Scobie, gathered round Bentley's Hotel,

broke into it, demolished the inside, and beat off the few policemen who tried to stop them. Then they set fire to the place, seeing that they could not find Bentley, who had escaped on horseback, and then quietly dispersed.

For this outrage three diggers—Fletcher, McIntyre, and Weatherly—were apprehended, taken to Melbourne, and sentenced to imprisonment; Bentley was also re-arrested, and sentenced to three years' hard labour on the roads; while Dewes was dismissed from the post he had occupied.

The Governor, Sir Charles Hotham, did all he could to conciliate the diggers, but without success. They sent three deputies—Kennedy, Humphrey, and Black—to demand the release of McIntyre and his friends, to avoid a riot. Their demand was politely refused, and the Executive began to collect all their forces and send them to Ballarat. On the Geelong road a party of the 40th Regiment was attacked by the people, whom they charged and drove with loss into their camp; the same day another detachment was severely beaten at a place called Eureka, out of Ballarat.

Next day a monster meeting was held by the inflamed diggers, when resolutions were passed denouncing the obnoxious license-fee, and declaring that they would no longer pay it. They also strongly protested against bodies of armed soldiers marching about the diggings and firing on the people without first reading the Riot Act, and also moved and carried the motion that a Reform League be established—all members of it protected—and that they would henceforth adjust any dispute relating to claims by arbitrators chosen from themselves only.

The Government officials proceeded to further extremities, and sent more soldiers, so that several skirmishes took place; while the diggers resolved that nothing short of a full concession of their rights from Government would now satisfy them. The Australian flag—blue with a white cross—was hoisted, a Provisional Government formed, and supplies levied in its name; while camps were formed on both sides, with barricades of sandbags, and a civil war declared.

On the night of December 1—two nights after the meeting—lights were seen in the tents of the diggers, signals passed, and shots were fired at the sentries, who were driven

in; the spies reported that the insurgents were drilling, arming, and forming themselves into companies.

Next day Commissioner Amos brought the news to Ballarat that the diggers had entrenched themselves at Eureka Camp in force, with the intention of intercepting the troops hourly expected from Melbourne under the command of the Major-General. It was to be fighting now in earnest. Right against authority, they had chosen their 'Minister of War,' and gave his draft-orders in return for the contributions which they levied on all classes.

Captain Thomas, the officer in command of the troops, determined, if possible, to take the camp by surprise, and end the affair by a grand *coup* before the arrival of the Major-General. All Saturday he remained passive, as if waiting for reinforcements. The diggers, thrown off their guard by these false signs of peace, had left the camp with only a few comparatively to watch, and many of these even, it being Saturday night, had been drinking heavily, and so were quite unprepared.

As a British soldier, with thoroughly-equipped men, against British subjects who had just taken to the business of war on what they considered their rights as men, and who were not either organised or armed properly, this grand *coup* of Captain Thomas's cannot be written about or remembered as either a brave or a noble stratagem, no matter how successful it was. He fixed upon the Indian hour of attack—the hour when men sleep most heavily—to steal upon the unsuspecting and nearly deserted camp.

It is not known exactly how many diggers were in the Eureka Stockade at the time, but they have been roughly estimated at about a couple of hundred strong; while the Queen's troops, military and police, numbered two hundred and seventy-six.

The Stockade rested on a slight hill, and was of considerable strength; but it was too large, and not protected by proper outworks to aid the defenders in a general assault, so that it was an easy matter for the soldiers to steal right up into the camp before they were perceived. Yet, for all that, the indomitable pluck of the diggers would have repulsed

the military hirelings had they been given the fair chance of war, and not taken at such a decided disadvantage, and at such a time.

It was Sunday morning, and day was just beginning to break, when the attack was made; Amos, the Commissioner, who knew the camp well, acted as guide. When the troops got to about three hundred yards distance from the entrenchments, detachments of the 12th and 40th Regiments, under Captains Quendo and Wise, extended in skirmishing order, while the mounted force moved to the left to take the rear of the insurgents. Then the main body advanced to the attack.

It was begun and ended in twenty-five minutes, that battle of the misty grey dawn. The sleeping diggers sprang to their feet the instant the alarm was sounded, and rushed manfully to their posts, pouring a heavy volley from revolvers and rifles as they ran forward to meet their assaulters, killing twelve of the front rank, and making the whole body waver for a moment.

Then the military recovered themselves, and advanced steadily, right upon the Stockade, firing volley after volley as they came on, and picking off the diggers wherever they showed themselves. Lalor, one of the leaders, was shot down almost at once, as he rose above a sandbag to direct his men, and left for dead where he fell; the other leader, Vern (a German), had somehow disappeared, and could not afterwards be found.

They fought well, those untrained diggers; it took the disciplined assaulters twenty of the twenty-five minutes before they could get over the palisades; after that, five minutes finished up the fight.

Twenty minutes of constant blazing away of rifles and revolvers, the din waking up the cockatoos in the forest an hour before their usual time, and sending them screaming away in a state of high excitement at this most unaccustomed sound, while the roadways outside and the Stockade within became lined with dead and dying soldiers and diggers.

Then an ominous pause and silence before the loud command of 'Charge!' was heard, and with a rush the soldiers were over the banks, with bayonets piercing the bodies

of the resisting diggers, who fought like heroes, hand to hand, with what implements they could snatch up—shovels and pickaxes against bayonets—for the remaining five minutes; after which, all who could run turned, and dived down the empty claims for refuge, only to be caught like rabbits in their holes when daylight grew strong enough to let them be seen.

So the Eureka Stockade was taken, and the Ballarat Riots finished up.

The tents were burnt; and as the other insurgents came straggling up to help their beaten friends, they were captured and sent off to Melbourne; 125 prisoners were packed off there for trial. However, to the glory of the Colony, no jury could be found in the land to convict them, notwithstanding the frantic efforts of the Crown lawyers to bring in the verdict high treason. The sympathy of the people was with the diggers and their just claims. They were, one by one, acquitted and set free by the citizen-jury of Melbourne.

A negro was the first put upon his trial, and liberated, while the court and crowded streets re-echoed with the wild cheering of the excited spectators, two of whom were seized and sentenced to seven days' imprisonment for this open contempt of court by the enraged Chief Justice. But this despotic attempt of Government to interfere with the liberties of colonials was defeated, while the universal sympathy of the people saved the land from a revolution; for although the Australian may be a peace-loving, loyal subject, who even professes to be Conservative in his politics, he has a temper which will not put up with the slightest appearance of oppression, as a friend informed me the other night when speaking to a red-hot Tory Australian about the politics of the Colonies. 'Yes, we are all mostly Conservatives, because we have never yet felt the yoke; but if it ever came to press upon us in the slightest degree, then we would throw it off without a pause.'

This is, I suppose, what the Fourth Party mean by 'Conservative Democracy'; and a splendid definition of sound and manly politics it is.

I spent six weeks in the company of Mr. McIntyre, one

of the three riot leaders of Ballarat, during the voyage home. He gave me much of the information which I have written. As he represented the diggers then; at Bentley's Hotel and in Melbourne prison, so he still represents them as their member in Parliament. He is somewhat of the temperament of the Dockers' leader, John Burns, and is also a forcible speaker, and as ready still to lead on physically as he was when a young man, thirty-five years of age. He has had great experience of gold-digging, and is one of the best authorities on the subject.

We had many a long chat on deck, while smoking our pipes, about old days, gold, and the future of the Colonies as a gold-field. He believes that the alluvial days are over, even the moderate quartz-digging, yet is as firmly convinced that the gold which has been taken out of Australia already is nothing to what will be discovered in future, as scientific knowledge and long experience can with reason make him.

'We have been, up to this time, working too close to the surface, and hitherto have only got the thin end of the vein,' he said. 'I will show you how it is. You know gold is the heaviest of all metals, and at the time it got mixed with the quartz all was in a state of fusion; now, what would be the inevitable result of the cooling of this fused conglomeration?'

'Why, the weightiest would sink to the bottom, of course,' I replied.

'Exactly; that is what has taken place. The gold settled down in the form of a pyramid, with the thin end topmost, and the bulk at the bottom; and that is where we'll find it, when we can afford to sink our shafts deep enough. We must go right down, down through all the breaks, until we come to the base of the pyramid.'

Ballarat is a magnificent town, and would be beautiful, with its hilly surroundings, only for the excavated quarries and mounds of quartz powder which lie about the mouths of the shafts which pierce it everywhere. It is completely honeycombed with shafts, and may be called a town above an underground city of arches and streets innumerable.

It was Sunday morning when I took my first walk about it—a soft, hazy morning, when everything looked etherealised and visionary, with that silvery mist hanging over it, and those warm sun-rays filtering through the tender film.

At my feet lay an old claim filled with water, and looking like a lake. The Town-hall tower and other lofty buildings and stacks appeared to be Oriental domes, so that I could not keep back the idea that I was overlooking Jerusalem, for the trees in the gardens took on the shadows of cypress trees—Jerusalem on that Sunday morning, nineteen centuries ago, when Mary found the stone rolled away from the tomb. I gazed onwards to see Calvary, and lo! it met my eyes. On the distant ranges beyond I saw a bare mount, treeless excepting for three branchless trees, which leaned from each other like empty crosses. It was Sunday morning, and the bodies of the two thieves had been removed, as well as the centre Incarnation; but the crosses had been left standing. The picture was complete, even to the most trifling detail.

CHAPTER XVII

BORDERLAND

Road to Deniliquin—A Human Mole—A Sunset at Castlemaine—The Bendigo Porter—A Working Larrikin—Echuca—A Lesson in Good Breeding.

It was a rush up towards Deniliquin after leaving Ballarat, with only a short time at Maryborough, a day and night at Sandhurst, the same at Echuca, and one night at Deniliquin, the end of the railway, and the first important township on the New South Wales boundary.

This part of the country is not so interesting from an artist's point of view as some other routes; yet it has its pretty spots left, which the prospector has passed over as unworthy of his shaft-sinking; but they are isolated beauty-spots. On all the principal portions of the land were

bored large, cave-like holes, those on the level surface distinguishable by the mounds of *débris* cast upwards, as if by gigantic moles; those penetrating the sides of banks and hills gaping blackly, with the earth and mud rolling down over the grass, and giving them the appearance of landslips.

In one of these holes, they told me, an old man had spent the last twenty years of his life.¹ He had worn out his clothes long ago, and although he had found no gold as yet in that hole, yet he had not worn out hope. For years he had not been seen, for he selected the night to bring out his excavations and look for the food which other diggers brought to the mouth of his cave and left for him there. They are a good-natured, charitable set, these diggers. They knew that he still lived and bored on, for each morning the meat had disappeared, and a fresh layer of earth was poured over the bank, without the slightest colour or trace of gold-signs about it. A strange old hermit, or human mole, who spent his life digging his own grave! Some morning they all knew that they would find the food untouched, and no fresh earth carried out, and then they would take it as a sign that this lucky digger had discovered his nugget.

Past Maryborough—which is a neat little town—the country improves, and becomes more diversified, with creeks, ranges, gulleys, and rivers. The Castlemaine Valley looks very fine and deep toned, with Barker's Creek running along, and a tumultuous picture of a sky overhead, as the sun sets in the middle of saffron, purple, and crimson clouds, like the representation of a demoniac battle-field, done with the brutal frankness of a modern Impressionist who is sincere in his madness, and not an ignorant amateur trying to pose as a master. Nature is a wonderfully vivid Impressionist, particularly in her sky-work sometimes, and lays on her *fleeting* tints with singular decision; only when she does this it is a quick-change effect—something to dazzle the beholder only for a second, and leave an excitement behind. What she wants us to linger over and look long at she is most pre-Raphaelite with in her treatment—almost as

¹ I find out from my other notes that this mole works at Omeo district, not Echuca way.

careful as 'Whistler,' the erratic, can be, *when he likes*, in odd corners.

To-night, as we glide through Castlemaine, Nature is like this inimitable etcher at his wildest in the way of flying strokes. All the heavens are a whirl of mad flourishes, with the prismatic colouring of an Oriental rug, while the earth waits, like an appreciative audience, silent and subdued.

A rare twilight follows this tempest of colour, Nature, after her wild flings and excited gestures, lying back, flushed and breathless, like a tired-out dancer. The clouds gather together in sombre masses, like cushions of silk-covered eider-down, while all about is pulsating. Then the colour dies out of that flushing space, and the pallor of death succeeds, to be followed by that resurrection called Star-land.

Sandhurst, or Bendigo, is, like Ballarat, a splendidly-built city, with massive buildings and well-laid-out gardens, spoilt by those awful mounds of crushed quartz and skeleton poppit-heads. They rear above the trees into the summer sky, and when the wind rises you get, instead of honest earth-dust, that finely-pulverised quartz powder, which, like ground glass, cuts when it enters, right down your throat, and right into the lungs. I understand that there is a company formed to make stone blocks of this quartz powder. All power to it! May it succeed beyond its fullest expectations, and hurry up the work of solidifying that poison-powder, so that people in these gold-supported townships may be able to live and enjoy the invigorating breezes of Australia.

Sandhurst has one great institution—its cabs: the poorest man may drive about here, if he prefers that sort of locomotion to walking. I drove by cab to the Gardens and Lake at Eagle Hawk, three miles from Sandhurst, for the small fee of sixpence—*i.e.*, twopence per mile.

I had an adventure, as I was leaving Sandhurst Station for Echuca, which impressed that particular station upon my memory. My train left at eight o'clock, but finding time heavy on my hands, I went into the station about half an hour before the time of starting. As I had found out that

the train was there waiting empty, I thought I would take my seat, and compose myself for the journey.

I found a porter at the gateway of the platform as I entered, who planted himself in front of me, saying, roughly : ' You can't get in here yet, mate.'

' I am going to Echuca, and have my ticket all right, and I believe that is my train,' I observed, pointing to the waiting train, and trying to get past him as I did so.

But the Sandhurst railway-porter had a high sense of his responsibility, and a forcible way of proving it, for without more words than ' Get back ! ' he brought his heavy fist down on my breastbone with a thud.

This was too much for me, so I returned the compliment, landing him on the flat of his back ; after which I sought out a suitable carriage, and was just depositing my traps, when he came rushing up to me in a terribly excited manner, followed by a couple of his porter friends.

' Haven't you had enough of it ? ' I asked, as he made a wild clutch at me.

' No, you —— ; and I mean to have more before I leave you,' he roared, putting himself into position No. 1.

' All right,' I replied, ' hold on a minute.'

I hadn't any coat to take off, and it took only a second to fling my felt hat alongside my sketching-bag and turn up my sleeves.

' Now then, old man,' I said when I was ready ; and we both set to for a warm five minutes of the manly exercise. He was a plucky fellow, but he didn't quite understand left-handed practice, so that at the end of the five minutes he threw up the sponge and declared that his outraged dignity was appeased, and himself quite satisfied, after which we shook hands, and as victor I had to stand drinks all round. This ceremony over, he insisted on getting a more comfortable carriage for me, and then, time being up, we parted the best of friends.

I was talking to an American friend the other day about porters, hotel-boots, and gentlemen of the like professions. We agreed that there was not much difference between the American and the English waiters, excepting in the matter

of 'tips.' There the marked difference showed up most strongly ; for whereas the English waiter will thank you, and touch his forelock respectfully in exchange for a few coppers, the American professional will give you specimens of the 'spread eagle,' intermingled with the stars and stripes, if you attempt to put him off with a few cent pieces. He is a mighty independent citizen of the United States, and a free man and brother, upon anything under a dollar-piece ; then the eagle may condescend to fold his wings and stoop his noble head, but for not one cent less.

The typical porter of Australia is a totally different specimen, particularly in side stations ; in the larger towns, I am sorry to say that they are getting contaminated with the vices of civilisation. The typical porter will always find a real pleasure in carrying along a lady's baggage, nor will he object to lend a hand to a man who is over-heavily burdened. But you must be careful never to offer him a 'tip' for such a service—a drink is all very well, and 'chum-like' ; but let it end there, and, unless you wish to be insulted, don't attempt to order him to carry a parcel for you that you can carry yourself. Remember that he has his feelings.

I had only one fellow-passenger to Echuca in the carriage which I had been escorted to—a very small young man, of the Sim Tappertit order of being, and supernaturally sharp, loquacious, and inquisitive. He was very youthful ; indeed, he had not yet begun to cultivate a moustache. But he was very old in experience and the ways of the world, and thoroughly self-possessed ; a perfect representative of the colonial 'larrikin'—i.e., the working, not the pickpocket, 'larrikin.'

He had been an appreciative spectator of my engagement with the Sandhurst porter, and introduced himself by remarking that it was a 'pretty mill' ; after which he plied me with a most exhaustive number of personal questions as to my business, salary, name, address, destination, hopes, intentions, aspirations, and friends past and present. I used to fancy that the Scotch were very fair at this sort of thing, but they were not in the competition with this youthful Melbournite.

But if he was inquisitive, he was also equally con-

fidential. He was much older than he looked—nearly twenty—and had been on the world and catering for himself since ever he could remember—before that period, most likely, which might account for his stunted growth.

A self-confident and patronising young man, he had tried art and literature, also acting, scene-painting, and the circus business, and pitied my position, for, as he remarked, they were the worst paying games he had ever been at. Indeed, I found out before we had got many miles upon our way that he had been everything that mortal man might aim at as a calling, except coach-painting; but he was now post-haste up to Echuca to add that to his general accomplishments.

‘I saw an advertisement for a coach-painter wanted up here, and I thought that I’d give it a fair trial; so I wrote about the job, and got it,’ he explained, composedly.

‘As an apprentice, I suppose?’

‘Apprentice be blowed! d’ye think I’d take an apprentice’s job? Not for this child; an able-bodied coach-painter, that’s what was wanted.’

‘But you say that you haven’t tried coach-painting?’

‘Never saw it done in my life; but it might be useful, you know, mightn’t it?’

‘Oh yes, very; but how are you going to do the work expected of you?’

‘This way. You see, the coachbuilder to whom I have engaged myself is likely to be a practical man, and well up to his business. I am also practical: I made him send me my railway-ticket, with a written promise of four weeks’ constant work, or, at least, regular coach-painters’ wages, and my fare back to Melbourne if I don’t suit him. Now you see?’

‘Not quite.’

‘What slow duffers you English are, to be sure. Don’t you see that I am on the job. My employer knows he has to pay me four weeks’ wages, also that I don’t understand the business; of course, he will swear a bit—that’s quite natural in his case. But he won’t lose his money more than he can help; therefore, to get something out of me, he will

put me up to the way it is done ; and as I always keep my optics skinned, before the month is up, and he kicks me out, I shall have learnt the whole trade. Don't you savay now, Boss ?'

'Yes, I savay,' I replied, a little awed by his bravery. 'You're not afraid that your employer may ill-use you, or—or—even murder you, are you? He may be a hot-tempered fellow, you know.'

'Not a bit ; none of them have hurt me much so far. And that's how I have learnt all my trades ; a pity though, isn't it, that this is the last I have left to learn ?'

There was a tone of real regret in this enterprising youth's voice, as he sighed, and looked for a moment out of the carriage-window. It was like young Alexander sighing for new worlds to conquer. I felt sincerely for him under the circumstances.

'And what will you do after you are kicked out from Echuca ?'

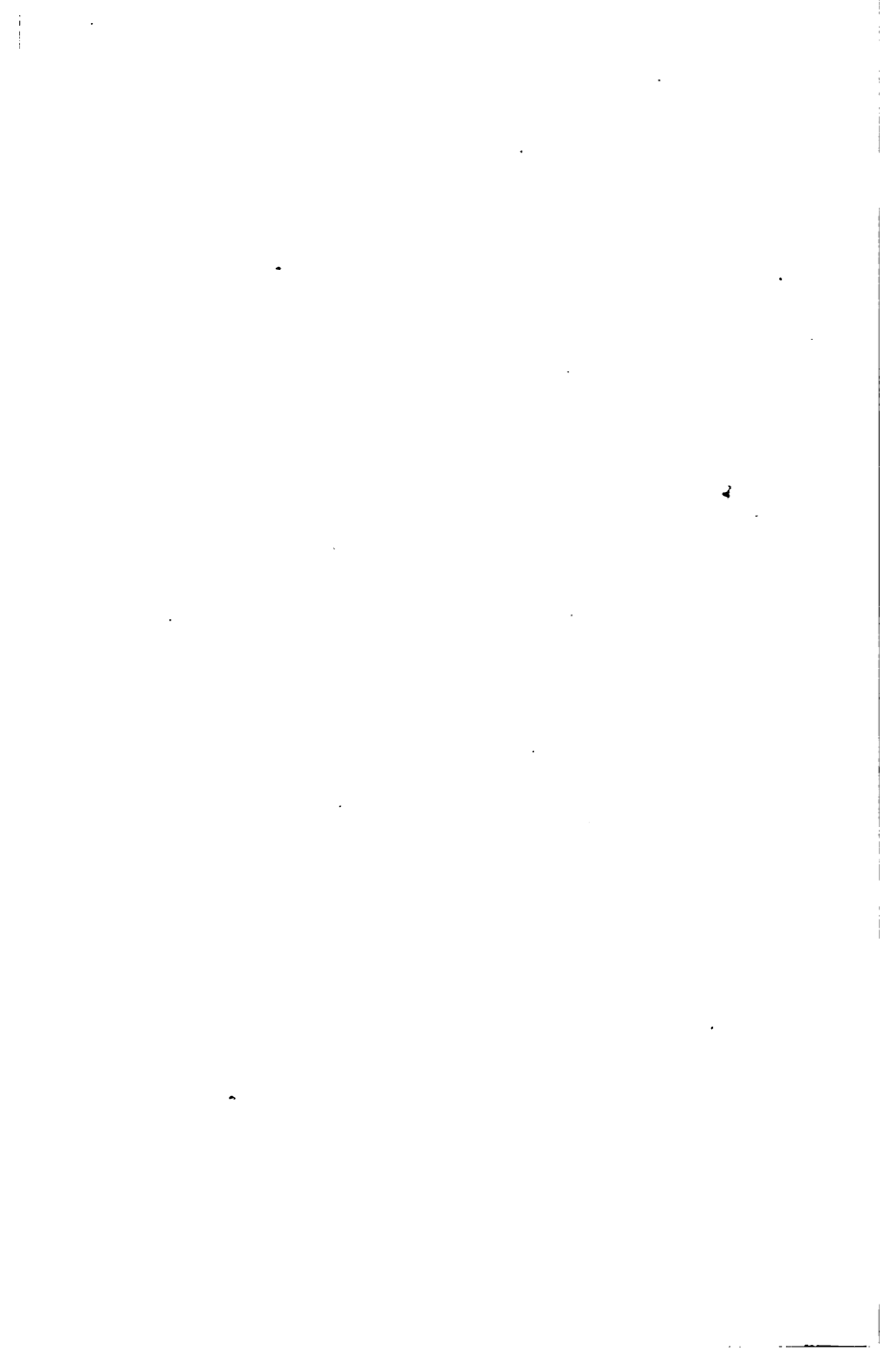
'Go back to Melbourne, and apply at all the coach-builders there for a job,' replied this hero, promptly. 'I don't say that I may quite *please* the first or second job I get, but on the third or fourth I'll be all there.'

It was a noble idea, and one which could alone be generated in a fertile brain ripened by a generous, Southern sun. I looked over the weazened little impudent face, and the assertive but puny legs, now crossed in an easy fashion, with a dazed gaze of wonderment, as he produced his empty pipe and asked me for a fill ; and then, yielding up my cake of Ruby Twist and my box of lights, I turned sadly to contemplate the passing landscape.

The moon had by this time risen, and was bathing the whole land with a warm glow—one of those moons which are never to be seen in the land of fogs, lustrous, mellow, and thrilling in its intensity. All objects could be seen almost as well as by daylight, only with softened edges and broader masses of light and shadow—a night and a land for Titania and her Court to come to and play. For such a rare delight as these moonlight nights give, one may well be scorched a little by day. We were flying over an enchanted land of filigree-work in pale gold.



ON THE RIVER MURRAY



Echuca, the half of which is claimed by New South Wales, lies on the River Murray. Like all border places, the party feelings of the two colonies become concentrated here; on this side of the bridge which crosses the Murray the Echucans are rabid Victorians, on the other side they are rabid Welshmen.

There are two big rivers at Echuca—the Goulburn and the Murray. There is also the Campaspe, which joins the Murray here, and forms a peninsula, upon which the town stands. It is flat ground all about here, and liable to winter floodings; but along the banks grow some very fine, heavy timber—the red gum, which is useful for building purposes, being easily cut and beautiful in colour. Barges and river-steamers ply constantly up and down the River Murray, carrying wood and other merchandise; there are also large sawmills on the banks, and a fine vineyard of over sixty acres of vine cultivation here.

I measured one of the red-gum trunks here on the banks of the Campaspe River, about four feet from where the roots began to spread out, and found it to be thirty-three feet in circumference.

After leaving Echuca, I crossed the border, and was in New South Wales. Hitherto, all along the Western District and up this line, although I had mixed with many wealthy and fashionably-dressed Victorians, I did not find that my outlandish, digger-like costume made any difference so far as courtesy was concerned. It was at Deniliquin that I received a lesson on the importance of dress which almost made me feel ashamed of my temerity in daring to consult my own taste in such matters.

I went to one of the hotels. It chanced that I had taken one of the fashionable places of resort for the gay young squatter bucks of the Riverina District; for Deniliquin is quite a fast and fashionable township in its own little way. At the bar I saw a pretty barmaid, of whom I inquired if I could have a bedroom for the night.

She glanced at me in that coldly aristocratic way which the true English-manufactured, railway-station bar-ladies sometimes adopt when forced to attend to the plebeian wants of the British workman, and leave for a moment the

simpering masher who may have been engrossing their attention, while he dallies over his *curacoa*, and said that she couldn't tell me, but I had better ask the waiter.

I forgave this maiden, because she was pretty, and therefore had a right to be disdainful if she liked; besides, she was at the moment engaged in smiling sweetly upon half a dozen of gaily-attired 'Jackeries'; so, leaving the bar, I stumbled along the passage until I fell upon a waiter.

'Can I have a bedroom here, waiter, for the night?'

The waiter looked me over critically, and finally remarked:—

'I don't know if *you* can; I'll ask the master.'

'Yes, do, and look sharp, for I want to get settled.'

He went off, and brought the landlord, who also took a survey of me, and then said, a little reluctantly: 'Yes, I daresay you can; John, take him up to No. 40.'

I was evidently regarded as a suspicious customer in this respectable hotel. No. 40 was situated at the top of the house, so that I might not get too easily away, if I was up to any game; while my guide wanted to see what I had brought in the way of luggage.

'Any luggage?'

'No, John; none but what you see here.'

'Then it is the rule to be paid in advance when no luggage is brought.'

'That'll do, John; get my bill made out for dinner, bed, and breakfast, and I'll be down presently and pay it'; saying which, I shoved him outside, and shut the door in his face. I wouldn't have done this to a Victorian waiter; but then, none of them had treated me like this one—it nearly felt as if I had come back to dear old England.

I had a wash and brush down, and then descended to dinner. They were all there—Jackeries young and old, squatters, and fashionably-dressed ladies—therefore, as all eyes were turned towards me as I entered, I felt for an instant abashed; but I soon recovered myself, and sat down in the chair set for me.

No one spoke to me at dinner, so that all I had to do was to eat, drink, and amuse myself by listening to the

innocent prattle of the others; then, after dinner, I sought the smoke-room to enjoy my pipe.

It was here that the kindly but severe lesson was given to me. The gentlemen were all speaking to each other, when the subject of Chinese opium-dens in Sydney started up, and one of the gentlemen made a remark about the exceedingly filthy state in which they kept their houses, making the statement with the authority of one who knew the subject from personal experience.

I was much interested, and wanted to know more, for my experiences of the Chinese of Little Bourke Street had been exactly the reverse; so, on the impulse of the moment, I asked him a question about it, expecting, of course, to be answered.

But, to my astonishment, this gentleman turned round, and looked me slowly all over, from head to foot—that kind of lingering gaze which is so comforting to the recipient thereof; after which he turned back again to his companions with a remark about ‘infernally impudent,’ at which they laughed, as if it had been a merry jest which he had made.

I am a very bashful fellow, as a rule, and easily upset in an argument; but this was the sort of reply which was best calculated to take the shyness right out of me. Had he been a very young man, I would have overlooked it entirely; but he was middle-aged, so I could not. Therefore, quietly rising from my chair, I walked up to the group, and observed: ‘I beg your pardon, gentlemen, but is this—person very deaf?’ And then I waited, with a bland smile, for the reply.

None came for a little space, and then one young fellow, to whom I was looking, muttered:

‘Not that I am aware of.’

‘Because I asked him a question upon the subject he was speaking of, and in which I am deeply interested.’

‘I am not bound to answer every question that a cad of a stranger may ask me, am I?’ blurted out the party himself, his face scarlet with passion.

‘Certainly not,’ I replied. ‘This is a public room, and the “cad of a stranger” apologises to you all for his “infernally impudent”’; with which humility I went to bed sadly.

Two days afterwards I had cause to be very sorry for that same gentleman, for the New South Wales squatter whom I was visiting, and to whom I had related my first public reception in New South Wales, grew very indignant over it, and swore roundly that it must have been a stranger to Deniliquin who could act so rudely to any one.

‘I must drive you down, and introduce you to some of the natives, who will soon take that bad impression out of your mind.’

So we drove down, and as we were walking along the street we almost ran against the gentleman of the smoke-room, whom my friend greeted warmly.

‘Let me introduce you, Mr. Smith, to my friend, Hume Nisbet, who has been atrociously treated by some fellow——’

He stopped short in his speech, for the party he was introducing dropped the hand he had spread out for me to take, and stood looking upon me with almost comical consternation.

‘The devil!’ he gasped out at last.

‘Yes, that is the fellow,’ I replied, with a laugh, but keeping my hand still in my pocket.

‘What fellow?’ cried my friend.

‘The one who proved to me how necessary it is for a man to be dressed in society.’

‘Oh, hang it!’ said the poor man, as he mopped his head—‘don’t; how the mischief could I tell who you were in such an outrageous get-up?’

‘Just so,’ I replied. ‘Now let us go and have a drink, and tell me about the Sydney opium-dens.’

CHAPTER XVIII

SHEEP-OWNERS AND THEIR ENEMIES

The Riverina—Dry Weather at Deniliquin—Temples to Tethys—‘Jackeries’ and ‘Cockatoos’—Old Baldy—An Old-fashioned Hotel at Castlemaine.

It was a source of great comfort to my friend, the Riverina squatter, when he found that the rudeness of my reception

could not be laid on the shoulders of New South Wales ; for the gentleman who had done it had only lately come out from England, bringing with him his insular prejudices. But he was not satisfied with this ; he went on further with his investigations, regardless that I treated the whole thing as a joke now that it was over. His patriotic pride was up, and he would not let the matter rest until he had convinced me that all in the smoke-room at the time of the affront had been ' Jackeries '—*i.e.*, young gentlemen sent from the mother-country to learn the business of squatting ; the waiter was an insignificant Cockney ; even the pretty barmaid had only lately been imported—so that, as he triumphantly explained, New South Wales was entirely exonerated ; she had not been in it at all.

And certainly, with the exception of this little incident, I never had any cause to complain of the hospitality of this Colony. I will admit that they are hardly quite so free and lavish in their first reception of strangers, and are more sedate and quiet, and without the youthful impetuosity which suits my own youthful heart, and which distinguishes the Victorians ; but then they are older, which may be the reason why they like to know a little about you before they take you to their bosoms.

I had great reason to mistrust the positive statements of Mr. Smith regarding the sanitary state of the Sydney opium-dens, not only from what I had seen in Melbourne and other parts, but from the general remarks which he made about the Colonies, and which proved that, if he had gone over them, it had been with a proper pair of John Bull's specially-manufactured British smoke-tinted spectacles over his eyes, which brought everything down to the tone in which he had *prepared* himself to see them ; so that I did not feel as if I had improved time much the hour we spent together—after all, I would have to go and judge for myself.

Deniliquin is decidedly a squatters', therefore a very swell, town, although not large. As they are all masters in the art of riding and racing, they have a very flourishing Jockey Club. The library is not a very prominent institution with them, there being in the Mechanics' Institute

(which I don't think is free) only 725 volumes, which, compared with most Victorian towns of the same size—Maryborough, for instance, where there are 1,250 volumes in the Free Library—is rather a poor show in the matter of mental pabulum. However, the inhabitants of this border town, if not greatly addicted to the taking down of books from shelves, come out very strongly in the way of hotels, there being twenty-seven within the municipal area. Not a bad supply for a population of 2,500.

The Edward River runs through the town, and a very pretty view of the Public Hall, with rustic bridge and well laid out gardens, can be had from the roadside; also picturesque reaches of the river, with water-plants floating and reeds waving over its surface. This river is subject to great droughts, and as it was about the height of the dry season, when fires were more rife than green grass, I saw it in its very worst aspect.

These droughts have been the one great affliction of the Riverina district, although they are now partly remedied by dams, which have been made at considerable expense, but as yet are only partially successful. Had the Australians the power at command (cheap labour) of the ancient Pharaohs and Indian kings, they would build vast temples to Vesta, also to Tethys and her daughters, the Naiads, and so solve the difficulty. Great temples of stone above, where the flocks could come for cooling shelter and sacrifice their wool on the sheep-shearing altars, while deep ice-cold lakes would be made below, which the sun's rays could not penetrate to lick up. Egypt and some parts of India are hot, thirsty lands, and so was the site of Babylon; yet all these ancients could afford to have cooling fountains playing in the sunny air everywhere and all day long. But then labour was cheap in ancient times, and humanity not of so much consideration as it is now in the Colonies. Still, I hope that when next I visit the Colonies I may see a few of those temple-reservoirs studding the dry land, with green gardens about them, while they raise their massive walls and picturesque domes grandly above the tree-tops.

The whole land, at the time I visited it, looked like a lately-ploughed field, dingy, grey, and grassless, with sheep

starving and dying of thirst by the wayside in dozens. Mothers were bringing forth their young with grief and woe—a regular Golgotha, or place of skulls and skeletons.

The flocks were no longer grazing, but trying to exist, as pigs do, by grubbing for roots, gasping at us, as we passed, with parched mouths from which no bleat could break. They were waiting with lank, starved bodies, as their owners were waiting, impotently, upon the coming of the long-delayed rain.

When it came, then all this scene of desolation would be changed as if by magic—what was black now would be luscious meadow-land of the richest green, and covered with the most ravishing flowers; then the flocks which had outlived this weary time of probation would revel in Arcadia, with gushing streams everywhere, and the land be transformed from a gloomy epic of despair to a glowing pæan of rejoicing. It is almost worth going through Purgatory to get safely into Heaven. The toothache is a bad complaint, while it is with us; but there is no balm like the peace which comes after it has gone.

There were two names which I heard here almost for the first time—the ‘Jackerie’ and the ‘Cockatoo,’ as applied to white people.

The ‘Jackerie,’ as I have explained, is the young gentleman who pays for being an apprentice to a squatter. His privileges are: he lodges in the house with the family of the squatter, is expected to dress like a gentleman each night he is home to dinner, and generally make himself agreeable to his host and hostess.

His duties are much too numerous to mention: if there is any disagreeable work, the station-hands invariably leave it for him to do, for they generally abhor him as an upstart; he is in the saddle all day long, from break of day till sundown, and he gets plenty of opportunities to learn his trade in all its branches.

Yet they are great mashers from sundown to bedtime, and at some of these stations are as punctilious as to etiquette as on board a man-of-war. I was nearly overcome, the first night I spent at one of these stations, to find myself ushered into the drawing-room amongst ladies and gentlemen in full

evening dress. For a moment I felt dazed as I burst upon the dazzling company in my grey flannel shirt, with collar attached, and trousers only—I was like Pickwick when he mistook his bedroom, or rather a sleep-walker who had suddenly awakened to find himself confronted by a startled covey of boarding-school young ladies. Then the incongruity of it all struck me as being so awfully funny that I burst out laughing, and carried it off with a joke, at which the company laughed, although I don't think the young ladies quite forgave their father for inviting such a barbarian into the bush.

The 'Cockatoo' is the natural enemy and horror of the squatter. In olden times he would have been driven out and his cultivated fields trampled down by wild bullocks, but now the law protects him, and the squatter has to grin and bear it as best he can.

The 'Cockatoo' is a selector who has bought a piece of land uncomfortably near to the station land, which the modern squatter can now only hire provisionally. Many of these cockatoos come simply to annoy their wealthy neighbours and levy blackmail in the form of being bought out. With these men the cultivation of land is a mere farce; they raise up a rough shanty, loaf about all day, and steal their neighbours' sheep at night. Their allotment is a constant offence to the eyes of the land-renter, until at last he is forced to give them their own price and buy them out of their land on some pretence or other, so as to evade the law; *i.e.*, one of the squatter's friends or trusted hands who may not yet be a landowner gets the money from the squatter and buys the nuisance out, from that particular spot at any rate. A real *bona fide* 'cockatoo' of this caste goes about from station to station and makes a good income with this blackmail business.

Squatters, as a rule, do not encourage selectors near their land. If the man is honest in his intentions, and means to raise a homestead, he is rarely successful, as he can so easily be boycotted. He generally ends in selling out and seeking the forest allotments. In the olden times the selector hadn't the ghost of a chance, for the only magistrate to whom he could complain was either the

squatter who had injured him or some other of his class and intimates. The stock-drivers could always manage to let a rail slip when driving their wild cattle at such times as his fields were nearly ready for reaping. In a few minutes the cattle would trample and destroy the work of months. He could appeal, of course, to a higher court than the local magistrate, but that meant expense and time, which he could not afford; so that it mostly ended in his selling out to the tyrant and removing his household goods elsewhere.

The modern 'Cockatoo' represents the Nemesis of the honest selector, and the honourable squatter has to suffer for the unjust tyranny of predecessors in the good old Norman times of the colony, when might represented right amongst the great shepherd kings.

I regard these avengers—the sham selectors or 'Cockatoos'—with just abhorrence, and think no actions too strong which would wipe them off the face of the land, and all their clan with them. I can enter also into the injuries of the squatter when he looks over what he regarded as his rights and sees them taken from him by Act of Parliament. It is disagreeable, to say the least of it; yet the cure lies in their own hands. Let them make their sons and sons-in-law farmers, and let them till and cultivate the land; for that is what the loamy parts of the country must eventually come to (the desert is the place for sheep-farming on a great scale). Let them send for all their relations and make them part owners, so that they will not be annoyed by the sight of an avaricious and loafing 'cockatoo' settling down within sight of their own homestead and preying upon them; for it is but right, after all, that all good land should be tilled, wherever it is found.

It is an interesting and free life, this station work: the young men get up at daybreak, swallow their breakfast, saddle and mount their horses, and fly away like Bedouins of the desert—an exhilarating and healthy, if not a very intellectual existence, for I defy any one to spare much time for thinking when a large station has to be gone over and looked after.

I join the 'Jackeries' in their early ride, and, as I

have not had a horse under me for many a year, and then only on an off-chance, they select the oldest horse in the stables for my use. He is perfectly safe.

Old Baldy, who never had a vice even in his most skittish days, may suit now the most decorous bishop. He has not been seen for years go at a faster pace than a walk—an animal precise and sedate as an old soldier, with a back square, or, rather, full of angles, and ribs which press somewhat unpleasantly against the calves of legs when they bestride him; his profile is Roman and high bred, with a general air of lofty forbearance which is a trifle awesome to such a novice as I am.

Baldy is not often taken out of the stable, unless it is to recline upon the grass of the paddock; so he exhibits a little surprise as he is led forth to-day. He regards me with languid indifference as I go forward to mount, but when I attempt to mount on the wrong side he wakes up all of a sudden, and flings back at me a side glance which is a fine blending of scorn and fear.

‘Never saw old Baldy so startled-like before,’ murmured one of the ‘Jackeries,’ as we trotted out of the yard. ‘Looks as if he were recalling the days of his youth.’

Baldy, poor fellow, doesn’t know the difference between a genius and a jackass, but he feels that he has something mortal strange upon his back, for his eyes are rolling fearfully as he paws the ground like an ancient Juan trying to waltz. He has received a galvanic shock to his weary nerves, and the rheumatic joints are beginning to relax.

Then the others begin to gallop, and, wonder of wonders, Baldy attempts to beat them; fear banishes caution, and he sets off with a wild snort and a throwing up of his fine old Roman nose.

We rode that day about ten miles, and were about three hours on the journey to distant wool-sheds and outlying shepherds’ huts, while all about us lay gloomy mirages of lakes and gum trees; but it might have been a hundred miles from the after-effects.

These mirages come with the long drought, and spread all about one. Say, fifty yards distant you see a lake

gleaming white, you ride up to it, and it disappears in a little flash of smoke amongst the grass roots, to be repeated further on; yet it is wonderfully realistic while it lasts.

An old horse is a very fine and safe horse for a timid rider *who is made of cast iron*. I was not, and when we returned, and my hostess asked me to sit, I was forced to reply that I preferred standing.

The same objection to using a chair, except in the form of a *prie-dieu*, clung to me all the way back to Melbourne. At Castlemaine, where I halted for a couple of nights, the people wanted to know if I had taken a vow against sitting. I replied that I had. 'Why?'—the reason was a sacred one.

I travelled down to Castlemaine with a young fellow who was a cattle-driver, and who came from the Hebrides. What a splendid fellow that was, and what a tale he told me of the life of a drover through the interior! I reserve it for the present, as it takes in all the troubles and experiences of the explorer overland.

Castlemaine is where Burke, the explorer, was born and brought up. There is a pillar put up there in memory of his ill-fated expedition, and in honour of him, by his town-people. There are, of course, other things to be seen at Castlemaine, but this is what brought me chiefly there—this and the desire to rest my aching bones.

It was late when I got in, and so I took the first place I saw. It was not a very tempting hotel. They likewise had their own ways there; but still, after I had fairly won their confidence they treated me more than kindly.

I found that in this hotel they were old-fashioned, and would not tolerate the servility of modern ways. It was one of the few relics of the past that I had seen up to this time.

For instance, when I went to bed I left my boots outside my door to be cleaned according to hotel habits. In the morning I heard the maidservant knock at the different doors, crying, 'Ye've got to get up, if you want any breakfast, for it's jist about ready.'

Grunts and oaths followed the maiden in her passage.

When she got to my door I heard her kick something out of her way and pass on to the next.

I jumped out of bed, as I heard the others doing, and scrambled into my clothes, and opened the door.

It was my dirty boots which the maiden had kicked out of her way. Then I remembered that in the early times, when fastidious guests wanted to polish their boots, they had to do it themselves, so I wended my way to the kitchen to ask for the materials.

'Was them your boots that I found at the door this morning?' asked the maid, as she pointed to where the brushes were.

I admitted the delinquency meekly.

'Then don't you try that on again in this house,' answered the irate maiden, darkly, as she turned her back upon me in her virtuous indignation. 'This here is a free house for women, not a place for slaves.'

I waited after that until I reached Melbourne before I tried to get any one to blacken my boots, happy to have got off so easy. In the good old times I might have been kicked out of the hotel.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAKE DISTRICT OF GIPPSLAND

The Life of a Cattle Driver—Warragul—A Lenient Judge—Sale—
The Lakes—A Native Poet.

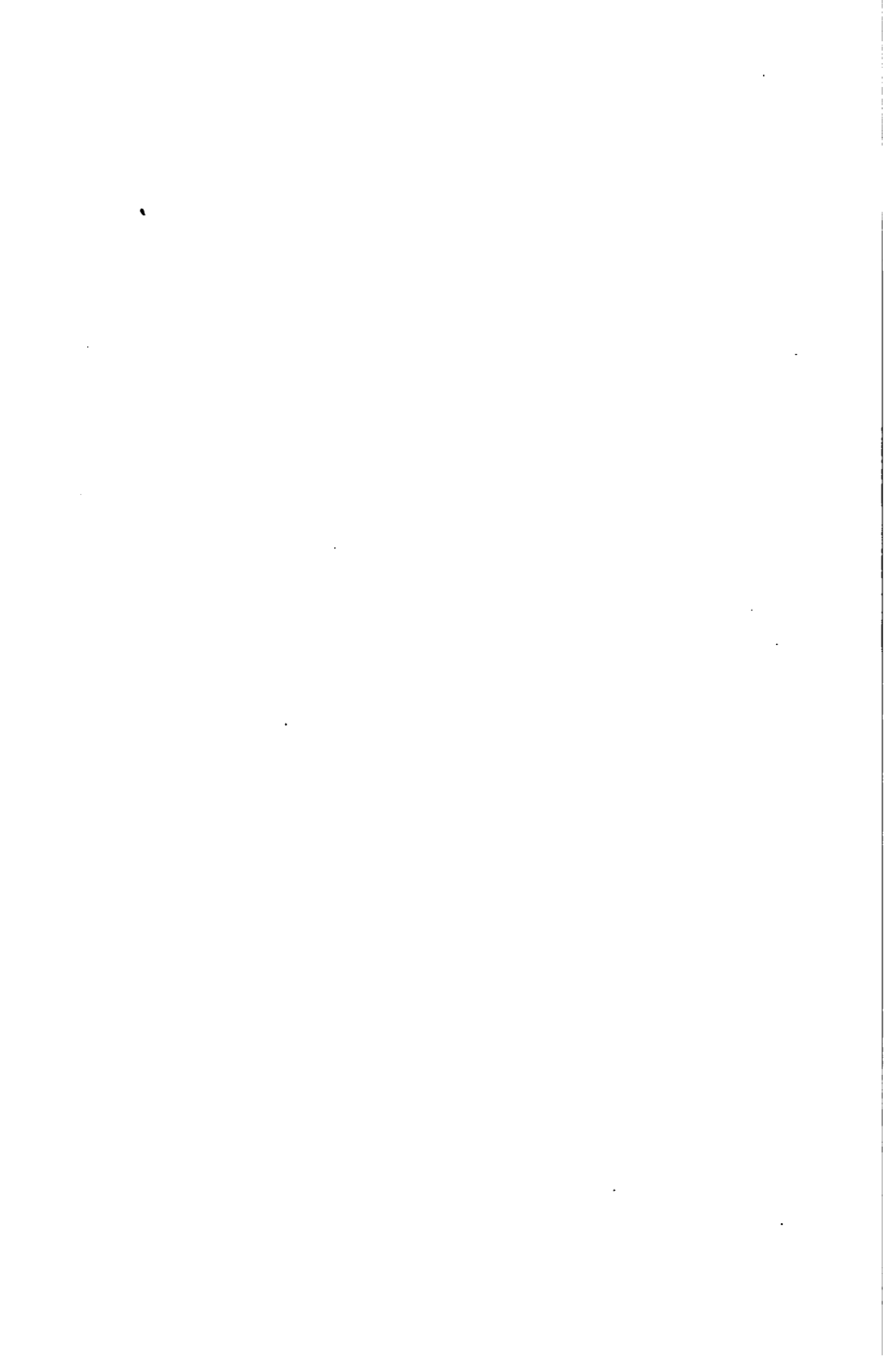
WHEN an explorer makes up his mind to go through the heart of Africa or Australia, the nation prepares to see him and his companions, camels, horses, and baggage, set out with a perfect wave of excitement; or waits during the long silence which follows his departure with gloomy foreboding; and if he returns all right, or even not all right, what a universal hero he has become.

How few of us give a thought to the fact that almost constantly slave-drivers are driving their captives over the



LAKE DISTRICT, GIPPSLAND

Hume & Co.



same unknown route in Africa, enduring the same dangers and hardships as the world-famed explorers are enduring, and all merely for a very modest wage from the master who orders them to go.

In Australia, by far a more trying country to get through than Africa, the cattle-driver is a hero as great as the biggest explorer could possibly be, only like many a true poet he thinks nothing of himself, neither does the world know or care anything at all about him.

Half a dozen of these plucky fellows will get the order to take, say fifty or a hundred thousand head of cattle, with perhaps double that number of sheep, from the fat lands of Camperdown to some northern Queensland station which the squatter may have taken for some younger member of his family, and without giving a thought that they are doing exactly what Burke and Wills tried to do, they mount their horses and ride out of Camperdown station with merely a wave of the hand on that long and perilous journey.

It may take them two and a half or three years to cover that thousand and a half of miles, for sheep walk slowly, cattle are apt to stampede, and have to be hunted after, feeding-ground has to be sought for this great following, and long rests taken to recruit strength, and they are responsible for the flocks and herds under their charge.

Two and a half years of dangers and privations such as Burke and Wills describe in their unfinished diary; long distances to get over without food or water, yet over which they cannot hurry, but must ride at a slow walk; raids from hostile blacks, who are always fond of a bit of surreptitious mutton; floods overtaking them and their charges; so they go on from month to month, creeping up northward through unknown lands, over deserts worse than Sahara, lost to their fellows, yet never for a moment dreaming that they are doing any greater work than looking after their sheep and cattle; these are the unacknowledged explorers who have made Australia what it is, and will be, the greatest country in the world.

I did not go to New Zealand, but decided to take Gippsland instead, before going by sea to Sydney. I knew from

past years what New Zealand would be like during the months of May, June, and July : roads impassable, and an everlasting downpour. Had I gone, it was decided that I should go at the same time as my young shipmate, Bainbridge, who had just gone back. According to my calculations, I should have gone to the Pink Terraces and hot springs at the time of the eruption and their total destruction.

All the world knows how poor Bainbridge came by his death, and how heroically he bore his fate, writing his farewell message with the ground heaving under him, and that fearsome eruptive storm raging round. Many blamed him for staying in the hotel, and said that he had time to make his escape if he had liked to fly as others had done ; but we who knew him on board of the ' Parramatta ' during that six weeks, all felt that there was some dark fate upon him even then. He seldom spoke, but sat with us all through the voyage, but not of us ; he was unconsciously preparing himself for that awful Pink Terrace tragedy in New Zealand.

I made up my mind to stay for a night, to break my train journey to Sale, at Warragul in the county of Buln-Buln, partly because it was half-way, partly because it was not mentioned in my guide-book, and so I fancied I might get something fresh to write about.

We had passed, on this route, Toorak, the fashionable suburb, Armadale, and Malvern, where they cultivate the vine and grow tobacco. The wines of Australia are very fine when kept the proper time, and are, I should say, the least adulterated in the world. The tobacco is as yet entirely a question of time. As an experienced smoker, I view the colonial leaf with respectful reserve. I tried a fill of it *once*, in North Queensland : a cake had been presented to me as a sample ; it looked very fine, and I believe delighted the Papuan to whom I in my turn presented what remained after that fill, which I shall never forget, short as my memory may be as regards injuries.

Passed Caulfield, celebrated for its racecourse, the Goodwood of Victoria. I was in Melbourne again at the time of their great cup race. What a time that is in Victoria ! men, women, boys, girls, infants, all classes crazy over horse-

betting. I left a sovereign with a friend to speculate for me, for I had not the courage to be the odd man in a colony of gamblers, but I spent the exciting week at Lilydale and Fernshaw, amongst the mighty forest trees, so lost the opportunity to describe that wonderful sight.

But I did not miss the eight hours' demonstration in Melbourne. What a sight that was, the mighty army of triumphant workers marching along the streets with their banners and trade insignia, something to thrill and fill a man with pride for humanity! These were the men who so nobly helped our London Dockers to win their great victory in 1889—another gathering which made the tears rush over my cheeks with pride and glory, as I followed in the wake of the workers who will be masters yet in rights as they are in reality, and as they have come to be in Australia, the home of the free.

Hark, fresh reapers' feet are clanking, never falter or repine.

I was glad that I rested at Warragul, for I got a fine effect of morning mist, with tapering, tall trees upstarting on each side of the bush track, and one or two other sketches of the township lying in the valley. It will be a big place by and by when they get it cleared; as yet it is detached and scattered, still a very good sample of a bush township in its infancy.

It was while here that a Castlemaine paper fell into my hands, in which an account of a criminal case struck me very much. A hard-working, and hitherto honest digger, who was out of a job and on the tramp, had gone up to a house to see if they would sell him a loaf of bread. When he reached the house, he found the door open, but could not make himself heard; the people were all out. On the kitchen-table he saw a loaf of bread, and, feeling very hungry, he went in and took it, leaving the price of it where the loaf had been. He did not think it a crime, and when charged admitted the act quite frankly, and many people came forward at the trial to testify to his former honesty. The judge admitted that the prisoner's statements were found to be all correct, and to show his leniency under the circumstances sentenced him to twenty-one days' solitary confinement and one month's hard labour; the prisoner had

previous to this I am in prison for six weeks waiting his trial. The case altogether struck me as a peculiar one from point of law. The *leniency* of this judge was so remarkable, that I could not help wishing that he some day might occupy the place of the prisoner under similar circumstances, if only for the sake of hearing his opinions upon the law then, and what he thought about this kind of mercy. I think he was a young man, this remarkably lenient judge, too youthful I would say for his position, and I trust that the people taught him something before they let him go on his pleasure circuit; that is, if they did let him go on it. I have often wondered since if he is still laying down the law, or if he has been disbenched, and allowed to take to a more suitable calling.

I wish I could have returned to Castlemaine to have learnt the *finale* of this comedy, also to have visited Mount Alexander, the Harcourt granite quarries, and the stalactites in the mines there. I was fortunate enough to learn all about the diamond-drill, the instrument by which they now prospect likely gold mines. As the diamond bores down, it sends samples of the ground up exactly as it goes through it. Sometimes, however, it may come upon a cavity; and this is the greatest danger, for then the drill drops suddenly down and gets lost—a very serious matter to the company, as these diamond-drills are costly affairs. The Government lends them out to companies, who take the risk of losses and damage.

It was at Castlemaine also that I saw a repository work, where they smelted the gold leavings and made it pay; that is, they got all the crushed quartz dust, calcined it, and afterwards washed it for the sake of the stray grains of the precious ore which might be passed over. The calcined powder was of a dark chocolate colour, and I fancy was utilised as a pigment, or could be, for priming work.

I made a couple of sketches at Yarragon of the great forest trees, and resolved to stay there on my return.

Sale is the principal town of Gippsland, and looks a most flourishing and comfortable town, while the country round is in a high state of cultivation, hops and arrowroot being the principal products. The public gardens are well

worth a visit, while from Lake Guthridge a pretty view of Sale can be seen.

It was on a Victorian Bank Holiday I made the trip through the Lakes, therefore I had plenty of company; yet although coaches, hotels, trams, and steamers were crowded, no one bothered me in my sketching, while all were genial and kindly to each other, without the uncomfortable boisterousness of a Bank Holiday in England—no pushing about or asserting the rights of places. They saw that I was on duty, and freely made way for me, giving up their own seats and otherwise obliging me, by keeping out of the range of my vision as I was sketching.

We drove for three miles from Sale to reach the landing-place for lake steamers on the Latrobe River, or rather near where three rivers join, viz., the Thomson, Glengarry, and Latrobe. Gippsland never runs short of water, and is the most English, or rather Scotch like part of the colonies, always green, fresh, and lively, just what some of our own lake districts might be, with such a southern sun and limpid atmosphere over them.

I hear the cry of the bell-bird here; hardly so musical as I anticipated it would be, rather like the creaking of an unoiled axle, still near enough to give it a name. These rivers are full, and covered with wildfowl; in the nooks swim vast flocks of the black swan, teal, and wild ducks, while along the banks grow lines of the yellow wattle amongst the rich grasses and waving reeds.

So we sail on for ten miles of the river-way, twisting about, and at every turn finding out something delightful and surprising. One hour or more of this, and then we steam into the first of the lakes, Wellington, twelve miles long by ten broad. I never thought that I could see such a fresh-water lake in Australia; it was like Loch Lomond, while afar off rose the distant Alps floating in blue haze.

Amongst the company were Mr. Wallen, of the *Australian*, and his brother the banker at Sale. He had been watching me for some time as I filled up page after page of my note-book, now sketching with my left hand, now shifting the pencil to my right to write the names and general

description, and, as is my custom when interested with my subject, oblivious to all about me. He introduced himself, and afterwards, when he got back, described my achievements in very flattering terms, as the artist who used both hands at the same time.

There was also a young man who stuck to me faithfully all through the daylight and also most of the evening. He said that he was the Victorian poet, and had with him two admiring followers, who sang not only his praises loudly, but also his songs, set to airs of his own composing, for I discovered that this ambitious soul was not satisfied with the poetic gift, but he was also great as a composer of music, and had done some work as an artist. He had come to the lakes for the purpose of seeing if they were up to the 'Vagabond's' description, and felt disappointed and inclined to call that modest gentleman 'a ——— liar and base time-server.' 'Why, he'd truckle to anything that he thinks above him and fine,' he remarked, with a burst of gloomy Byronic scorn.

'Perhaps that's why he *trucked* to Lake Wellington and Gippsland generally,' I remarked quietly, as I listened and went on with my work.

'D'ye think this is good scenery?' he asked, with a wild glare at me.

'Very!'

'And I daresay you've seen a goodish bit of the world in your time, and lots of lakes?'

'Yes, a considerable number.'

'Well, I ain't been much out of Melbourne, in fact this is my first visit to the lakes or bush, but if I couldn't imagine a better lake and finer scenery than this is, I'd eat my hat. Why, there's no sort of inspiration about it; I can't get hold of any rhyme to fit to it; it's all a blank to me.'

'Ah, wait till you get home and have a rest from it, and then perhaps it may come upon you all right.'

'Perhaps, if there's anything in it at all *it must*; only I am disappointed with Nature,' he grumbled, turning away in a dissatisfied manner.

The youth was frank in his sincerity and egotism. This

Nature was not like what he expected it to be, and the profound breadth of it looked tame and common-place; he expected that it would be crammed like an artificial grotto, and could not yet appreciate the grandeur of isolation. And yet he had in his own immature way the right grip of what Nature's work ought to be, and what the Australian-born poet must tackle if he would make colonial poetry—viz., objects and feelings purely colonial. This young fellow had chosen the 'Gum Tree' as one of his subjects, another was the 'Kangaroo.' Of course his 'Gum Tree' was a parody on the 'Old Oak Tree,' and world-worn subjects of that description, and the laws of versification were utterly ignored. Still it was a move in the right direction, and by-and-by, if Apollo wills it, he will get at the spirit of the gum-tree and the grand secrets of Nature; then all will go right.

What would I not give to be Australian born, to be of the land which has not yet had a great poet born to it. I come from the land of Scott, Burns, Hogg, and a hundred thousand others, but to be the first poet of his native land ought to be reward enough for any man; and yet my whole soul thrills with desire for the land of the gum tree—there is so much to achieve there, both in prose and verse; as Walt Whitman is the representative poet of America, so I expect the future great Australian to rise, unique, personal—egotistic.

'Isn't that fine, now?' I cried, pointing with my pencil to where the sun was setting all aflame of gold and purple over the ranges, and repeating the glory upon the glassy surface of the lake.

'Yes, pretty fair,' observed the callow poet. 'But I have seen better over old Melbourne.'

And the boy was right, for Melbourne was his kingdom, and when he came to his throne he would write only about that kingdom, as Turner repeated the sunsets of London in his finest creations; and where can the poet ever see more radiant visions and ærial shapes than those which soar upwards from the caverns of a thousand chimney-cans when the sun is going down, and transforming all that defilement and smut into floating forms of beauty?

We are steaming along, and the sun is going down

rapidly, when all at once we leave the wide street of glistening water, with its low banks and far distant background of hills, and are drawn into McLellan's Straits, startling whole clouds of wild birds, while the families of black swans scurry away to leave us a free passage.

What an exquisite passage this is, with foliage closing in upon us as we glide along its six miles of tortuous windings, then into the second of the lakes, Victoria (what an example of loyalty the Australians who fixed upon names were, to be sure!) Lake Victoria is not quite so large as Lake Wellington—I would say about seven-and-a-half miles long—but it is very beautiful, even in the fading light. I see it better as we return, and find it thickly wooded all round, with exquisite reaches, bays, islands, promontories, and headlands, some of the bays completely black with game.

Then with Bluffs Head we glide into another strait, known as McMillan's.

I wish my countrymen had not been so egotistic and prosaic; it might have been known as the 'Run of the Black Swan' in the native tongue; still, we forgive the name for the sombre gloom of the shadows about us, and after passing this we come to the queen of them all; for I suppose a lake is feminine, as all refreshing, cool, delicious things ought to be. I mean Lake King; Lake Helen King it ought to be by right.

The last gleam of daylight is on it as we enter, and as we return, the golden eye of morning; Fainting Range swimming in ether, Eagle Point Bay with its waiting yachts, landing-places where fishermen unload their boats, ravishing promontories wooded to the water's edge. Then into the Mitchell River, with its cultivated banks of hops, tobacco and maize, and bewildering twistings of wooded banks, and then under the bright starlight, with a half-moon hanging overhead, we land at Bairnsdale.

CHAPTER XX

GIPPSLAND

Bairnsdale—The Lakes Entrance—Jamie the Aboriginal—A Night at Yarragon—A Mud Bath, and After.

THEY were very full at both of the hotels that night at Bairnsdale, so that we had to be content with what we could get. I slept on the parlour table, with a rug over me, with four other early risers spread about the floor. All the beds were given up to the ladies, who occupied them in layers of two or three, and, in some cases, four deep. Yet they were an accommodating and good-tempered party, who had come to enjoy themselves, and did not let such incidental trifles interfere with their design.

Next day we set off for the Lakes Entrance, a place where a great deal of money has been already, and is likely to be yet, spent, before they can make it safe for vessels to enter. Here the breakers are always rough, and with only sand for a foundation, so that no breakwater can stand long before their strength. The present pier is a picturesque mass of wreckage, over which the waves rush or break, pitching high into the sunny air the dazzling white clouds of spray. Here we see the Ninety-mile Beach, with Red Bluff Head in the distance—the scene of many a wreck.

Lake King, as we return, looks not only a beautiful, but an animated and flourishing, place. After we leave those broken-down harbour works, and sail out of the Reeves Straits, there are houses, landing-places, and pleasure-boats scattered all about, past Jamie's Point; like a bit of the Trossachs, with here and there the hop houses standing up like quaint Dutch steeples; Rosherville, with its little pier, and deep reflection of wooded banks; the Tambo River, stealing out of the lake; fishing boats and yachts in shoals, aquatic birds skimming along, and leaving deep furrows in the smooth waves; low banks, followed by high and thickly-wooded bluffs, greet us in rapid succession. We have seen enough for one visit, but yet we have not explored the half of the most lovely of the lakes and rivers of this wonderful land of flood, mountain, and forest. The Back Lakes

are the most beautiful and least known of all, and are perfect Paradises for the diligent, beauty-seeking artist or the blood-lustful sportsman.

I suppose some day these lakes, so crammed with bird-life, will be cleared out ; but that need not be dreaded for some years yet. At present the birds are almost as tame as the animals were supposed to be before the temptation of Eve, and so abundant and prolific that a gun is hardly required to capture them.

At Lake Tyers, outside the Entrance, the Aboriginal Mission Station is situated. Here the last of the Victorian black fellows wait for the hour of extermination ; yet they lead a free and careless life, as they have always done, and regard the present owners of the land with cheerful and philosophic scorn. 'White fellow make road for Black fellow to walk upon. White fellow work hard to keep Black fellow ; but White fellow make prisons to shut up White fellow : White fellow dam big fool.' This is the aboriginal verdict upon his robber host, the European.

I was taking a stroll out from Bairnsdale in the twilight, when I met one of these sable gentlemen, who passed me with a pleasant laugh and a hearty Good-night ; then, as if a sudden thought had struck him, he shouted back :

'I say, you mate ! have you seen my gin Mary going along this road ?'

'No, Jamie.'

'No ?'—very anxiously, as if the question had been very important, and not raised merely as a blind, and introduction to his real purpose. 'Strange ! Sure you didn't see my gin ?'

'Quite sure of that.'

'She was a dressed-up gin, you know. Sure you didn't see her, mate ?'

'Perfectly sure.'

Then the real purpose of the interview came out.

'I say, mate, could you give me a half-crown ?'

'No, Jamie.'

'No ? Perhaps you have a shilling about you ?'

'Not even a shilling, Jamie.'

'Strange ! but perhaps you have a sixpence ?'

I shook my head in a negative way, for strangers are not permitted to give money or drink to these unfortunates.

‘A penny?’

‘Not even a copper.’

‘Poor devil!’—this in a very sad tone, as if he sympathised deeply in my dire poverty; then, brightening up: ‘But I know what you must have.’

‘What is that?’

‘A chew of tobacco; give me that.’

I delivered over the quid, and we parted, the best of friends. He had never expected money, but still, as a good reader of faces, he thought I mightn’t know the custom. He spoke good English, for they had taught him that at the station, but the old mendicant habits could not be eradicated. Mary, the gin, was all a pure invention.

Bairnsdale, or, as the natives called it, Wy Yung, or ‘The Young Duck,’ is a very rural town, with splendid ground all about it—the ideal of a settlers’ village-town. All the natives are hearty, and without that affectation of dignity which always makes me creep into myself, like a snail into his shell. I like men to feel, whatever their earth-time position may be, that we all come into the world in the same condition—naked—and must all go to the worms, unless we are mean enough to cheat these ministers of fate of their lawful rights by leaving directions behind us for cremation.

Through the Lakes once more, after leaving ‘The Young Duck,’ which I was fortunate enough to visit once again, and that after I had finished my wanderings of the year. I like to think of it as the place where I packed up my sketch- and note-books, for I have not one unpleasant memory connected with it.

From Sale to Rosedale the distant view of the Alps is very fine, with the river glimpses in front, and the black swans flying back from the sound of the rushing train (I notice, as they spread their wings, that the extremities are white, which is not seen when they are in repose). There are broad acres of cultivated fields in the middle distance, with great quantities of dead-wood between.

That night I was fortunate enough, by a fluke, to get a bed at Yarragon, after seeing Trafalgar and Moa, with the Haunted Gully. I was once more in the forest, and amongst the selectors.

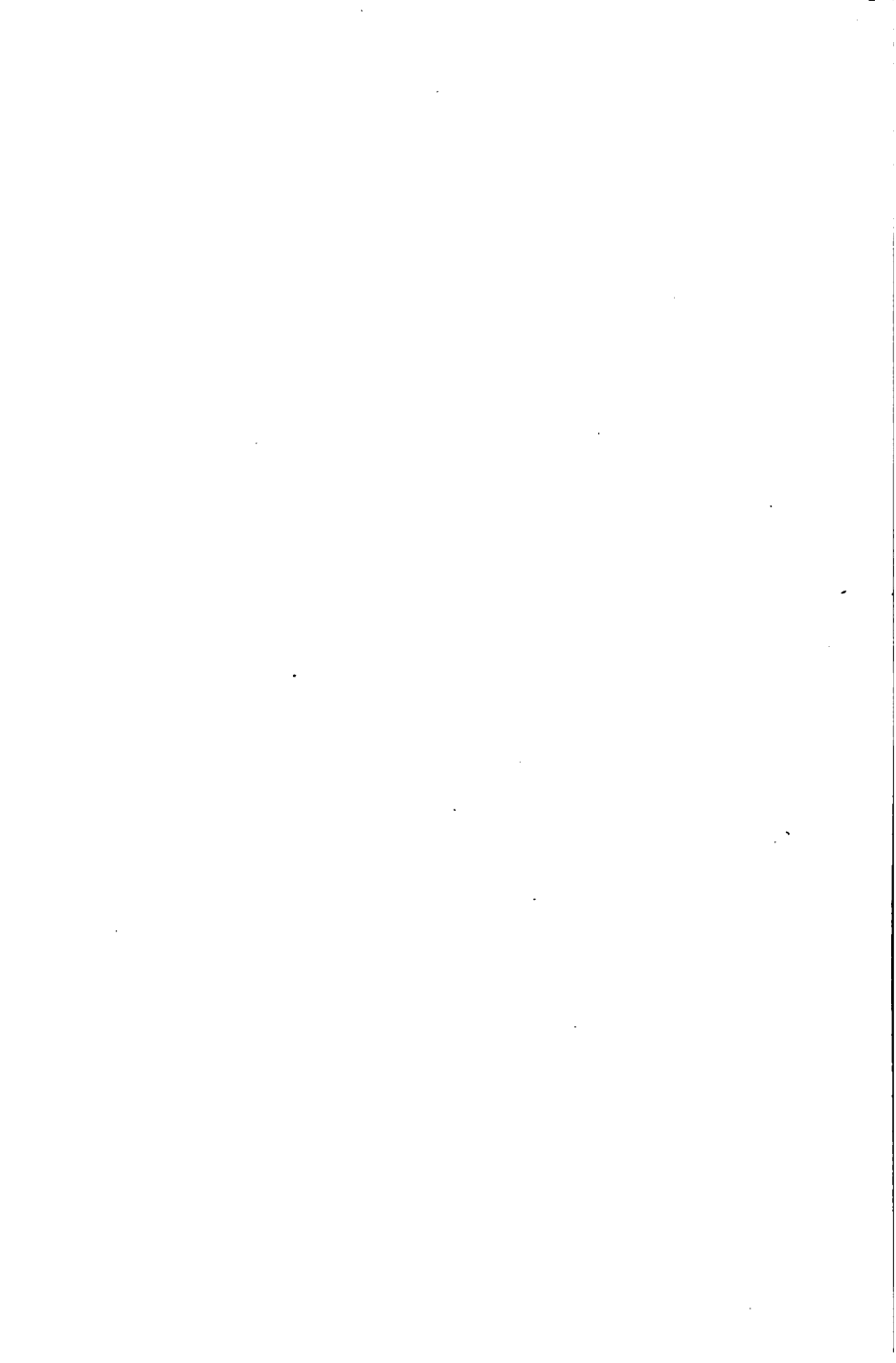
It was upon the eve of the forest-sports, and all the farmers, bullock-drivers, and stock-riders round had gathered into the small township, and filled to overflowing the little public-house. Supper was in the good old-fashioned style: the servant carried round a gigantic tin teapot; and filled up the cups as she passed; then came the hash, or stew; and each one helped himself to sugar, bread, and potatoes, when he saw a chance. It was rough, but hearty, and plenty of it, as there was of customers. One little Frenchman diverted the company very much. He was on the verge of delirium tremens—that fine nervous state before the ‘blue devils’ appear, when the wit is so high-strung and electric. He had been on the drink for weeks, getting more and more *spirituelle* every day. I saw him that evening at his best and most fantastic, as he tossed down the raw brandy, and jested like a Mephistopheles. Before morning his expected visitors had arrived, ten thousand strong, and he had to be lashed down to the table.

They told me that they were full, but, if I didn’t mind sleeping with three or four other men, that they could put me up for the night. When bedtime came, I told the landlady that I would just stay where I was, and sleep on the floor, as I didn’t like sleeping with men. Then she told me to hold on a bit, and she would see what could be done. After a little time she beckoned me mysteriously to follow her quietly, which I did, to find myself in a most comfortable bedroom, with plenty of room. The kind-hearted woman, seeing I was a stranger, had given me up her own bedroom.

Early next morning I went for a walk in the forest, where I fell upon a young man who had come up from Melbourne to look out for a selection; it was he who told me of the wind-up of the Frenchman’s wit. He asked me how I managed to get through the night; and when I informed him, he said I was lucky, for there had been six of them in



ABORIGINAL HUT IN FERNS GULLY



the bed which he occupied, and the Frenchman had been one of them.

‘It was awful, for they all came to bed uproariously drunk, and incapable of taking off their boots; so that, what with the kicking about, and the mad leaping of the possessed Gaul over the stomachs of his bedfellows, I was not able to enjoy much repose.’

I laughed at his account of the night, and then told him of one night, a little similar, which I had once passed in my boyhood.

‘Some friends of mine—there were four of them—having spent most of the money which they had brought out from England with the Melbourne barmaids, made up their minds to try the gold-diggings; so we all set out, I going half a day’s journey with them, to keep them company and say Good-bye.

‘We got to a little wayside shanty as night fell, so we resolved to spend it here in a farewell drink, and say Good-bye upon the morrow. It was one of those places where diggers called at coming to and from the diggings, with just enough accommodation for travellers on a pinch. Behind the bar a very ugly and middle-aged woman served the drink. She was the mistress of the shanty. I was young, and unused to liquor, so that very little took effect upon me. Before I had tasted the first glass I remember taking notice of her, and the number of gaudy rings upon her thickly-jointed fingers, and thinking how very repulsive-looking she was.

‘But as I sipped my brandy-and-water a curious change seemed to come over this lady: her age and ugliness gradually fell from her, until (I think I had got the length of my fourth glass) she became one of the most radiant young nymphs I ever had seen in my life.

‘I loved her madly, all of a moment. She was the maiden I had dreamt about. True, there seemed to be a soft mist enveloping her, into which she occasionally faded; also, the sham stones of her rings seemed to be strangely multiplied, likewise the paraffin lamps along the walls.

‘I got up, and staggered towards this beautiful creature, and, seizing one of her jewelled hands, kissed it passionately,

while I told my love in language the incoherence of which might have been excused for the sake of its earnestness.

"Poor boy," I heard her murmur, through the sound of the kisses which I was imprinting on that lily hand. "So young to be so drunk. What a shame of you fellows not to look after him."

'As I heard those cruel words, I thought that I would go outside and enjoy the fresh air, so I tumbled towards the door, and, opening it, went out.

'Some good people may not be aware of the fact, but still it is a fact, that fresh air is not the best remedy for intoxication when any one has been drinking indoors. The night, when we entered, had been a sultry one, with a storm brewing. During the time that we had been drinking one another's healths the storm had broken, and what had been nearly waist-deep of dry dust before had become a waist-deep quagmire of slushy but sticky mud.

'One instant I stood in the dark, with head bare, under the pouring rain, trying to remember something or other; and then, with a sudden plunge forward, I landed head first into an extra deep waggon-rut, and thus went to sleep, with my head down, and my feet sticking upwards.

'When I woke I found myself in bed, and daylight streaming in at the window. It appears that one of my four friends had also gone outside after me, and seeing a pair of legs and boots sticking from the mud, he had made a clutch at them, and dragged me out of the mire; then, with the assistance of the others, he had carried me up to bed, carefully put me, boots and all, between the sheets, and then—undressing themselves—they got in beside me, two on each side.

'Doubtless, it must have been a crush, but then they were all too tipsy to know it. When we woke, I found the mud had become dry, and also that the two friends next to me were stuck fast to me; as for the state of the sheets, that had better be left to the imagination.

'We all rose, looked at the bed solemnly, and then decided that the sooner we got away from that house the better it would be. So, stealing quietly downstairs, we paid our reckoning, and took our departure.

'My friends saw me about half a mile upon my road home, and then went theirs. What a return journey that was, to be sure! I tried several times, by rolling on the grass, to remove some of the mud, but eventually had to hang about behind a low bush outside of Melbourne, until kindly night came to conceal my blemishes. Then I sneaked to my lodgings, and tumbled into bed.'

'How did they get on at the diggings?' asked the young man to whom I related this incident of early days.

'Not much; they dropped in upon me one by one, like prodigal sons—footsore, bootless, penniless, and weary. The first returned a week after we had parted; a month of digging work sufficed for the bravest of them. The only things which they did bring back unimpaired were their appetites, and these they kindly left me to look after.' That was the beginning of our great commonwealth, before the married men and their wives joined our noble ranks.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BUSH

Monotony of the Bush—Yarragon—Size of Trees—A Young Man's Ideal—Laughing Jackasses—A Bush Church—The Bullock Driver—A Gentleman Selector's Paradise—Beaconsfield House and the Dandenongs—Weary Sundowners, a Theory—Farewell to Victoria.

AFTER breakfast this new-found acquaintance and I went for a long walk through the forest. He wanted to introduce me to a friend of his, a gentleman-selector—a man who had come out here with his wife because they enjoyed Nature, not because they required to make money. They were like Zimmermann and Rousseau—they were tired of the flippancies and narrownesses of society, and wanted peace, and freedom to do as they liked.

What a walk that was through the forest! People are apt to complain that, when you have seen one part of the bush, you may turn back, for you will not see anything

different all over the land. But I never found this monotony in bush-land: every different part seemed to have a character of its own. This Gippsland bush was quite different from the Cape Otway bush: again, the bush-land going towards Sydney did not appear the slightest degree like the western and eastern parts; true, the gum tree was to be found everywhere, but even it altered its lines and form distinctly according to circumstances. I could wander for many a long year watching the Spring blossoms come and go, and studying all the thousand varieties of an Australian bush, without feeling I had learnt enough.

Again, just when I had fancied I was done with the description of a walk through the bush, I always discovered, on looking back and thinking, that I had forgotten all the main characteristics of this particular part. Down Lorne way the general effect was drier and more crisp, although moister than Camperdown way. Here in Gippsland Nature was lushier—grasses grew ranker and more twining, plants seemed to be swollen in their stalks and fibres with juices. In the Otway forest Nature was lavish, yet robust; here she was riotous, as if filled up and softened with over-drinking. Flowers, ferns, grasses, reeds, and rushes swarmed up, and commingled in a crushing and overgrown fashion. They were all gigantic in their proportions, compared with ferns and flowers of the same species elsewhere, and all bulging with moist fatness: great thistles, ferns and fern-trees dripping with moisture at every leaf and frond; gigantic sprays of sweetbriar and brambles sprawled over the great tree-fences which lined the bush tracts; the gorse, nettles, and woodland weeds were like the weeds of a giant garden. The trees all seemed in unison with the undergrowth. We tramped on, like two pigmy giant-hunters, through the domain of the giants.

Yarragon lies buried amongst these mighty trees—a long line of street, with wooden, verandahed houses on each side, with a single line of telegraphs running through it. The gum-trunks are very massive here—big enough to hide the whole township if you stand a little way from one, and it gets into your line of vision.

Going through the forest on that occasion, we talked

about the probable size of some of the biggest Australian trees. He said that the Gippsland trees were reckoned to be the biggest anywhere, with the exception of some in Tasmania. He told me that he had met a man here, the last time he was up, who knew a man, who had been told by a friend, that a cousin of his had seen and measured a tree once which was five hundred feet in height and over ninety feet in circumference. Personally, I have lost a good deal of time going to distant places where these trees were supposed to be growing, but I haven't yet seen one so very large, although quite great enough to fill one with awe. As I walked round them, or in places sat under their arches when they were hollowed out, it felt like sitting inside an unlighted crypt, with the blackened beams and fresco-work on each side, and that undefinable space overhead.

My acquaintance was engaged in a bank in Melbourne, but whenever he had a spare holiday he spent it in the bush, keeping his eyes open, and looking out for a selection. His intention was to go on working at the bank, and out of his salary save enough to pay for the clearing and cultivating of his ground when he had fixed upon the site. He was young—barely twenty years of age—so was in no great hurry to settle down; but, like most young colonials, he had already mapped out his future: not to make too much money, but to live as the Latins did in their heroic days—cultivate his farm and his mind at the same time. How quickly one gets to love some people! We had not been more than an hour or so known to one another, and already we were confiding in one another our hopes and aspirations.

‘I shall do as my friend up yonder intends to do—leave the bush as I find it, excepting what is needful to cultivate in order to keep me and purchase books.’

‘And when you get married?’

‘I hope to marry a woman like the one my friend has got—refined, and yet contented with the life I mean to live.’

A wild burst of laughter broke out, as if in answer to this reply, from one solemn-looking jackass, who perched himself upon an old stump opposite us—‘He! he!!! ha! ha!! ha!!!—a burst of mockery which was chorused on all sides from

the different trees. It was the most disconcerting sound I had heard for a long time, as if these long-billed cynics were enjoying the absurdity of the idea of any created woman ever being found who could sympathise in such a wild scheme, or be satisfied with one patched skirt and only the admiration of her husband, soulless bipeds that they were.

We passed at this moment a little bush-chapel belonging to the Roman Catholic religion—a little corrugated-iron building, with a pointed spire, and the only cleanly-kept channelled walk in the countryside; the other trails were all waggon-wheel, ploughed ruts of sticky mud. What an air of utter peace and seclusion reigned over this tree-surrounded little building, with its Norman-arched windows and door, and that little ribbon of a straight walk. Here loving care had been expended; all the taste the rough worshippers could boast of had been lavished upon it. How magical the effect of the rustic slab-crosses which decorated the ends of the roofs of the chapel, and priest's hut at the back! A balm seemed to emanate from this quiet forest-nook, and give the lie direct to those mocking worldlings of laughing jackasses. Yes, here the woman had been found who had lived, loved, and sacrificed the dearest of her desires.

Farther along we came to a bush train-line—a single line of iron rails, running along over sleepers of tree-trunks. A rough ride it was, which we took advantage of on our return, sitting on the tops of the logs which filled the trucks, and rushing down the hill at a breakneck pace.

Soon after, the loud cracks of the bullock-drivers' whips resounded through the forest, and, as we neared the spot where they were trying to drive their cattle onward, the solemn hush was broken with language loud, resonant, and classical, such as I have heard on board ship, sometimes interblended with those revolver-like reports of the whip.

Every crack means a fillip of flesh out of some of the unfortunate hides of these dogged teams.

We found two of these worthy sons of the forest trying to extricate an immense tree-trunk from a swampy part of the bush, in which it had got embedded. Two teams of oxen were chained to the log, which they vainly tried to move, in

spite of the adroit cracking of the two long thongs and the passionate terms of endearment which were poured upon them in an ever-varied and endless stream.

There they all stood, stupidly waiting, as if for some inspiration, some especial word or token of blasphemy which had not yet been uttered by their owners (although I would have thought that their vocabulary was well-nigh exhausted), before they could wake up, and begin to pull, paying, seemingly, no more heed to the little square flecks which each moment the whips tore from their sides than if they had been flea-bites, their heads bent forward, and their eyes luridly cast to the earth as they stood, two abreast, with the wooden yoke between them, like coloured statues of indifferent and brutish slavery.

The funny portion of it was, that all these seemingly ill-used and energetically-cursed-at quadrupeds had the most absurd sweetly-sounding and endearing sylvan titles for names, almost like a scene from Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'

'Cowslip,' 'Daisy,' 'Bluebell,' 'Dewdrop,' 'Woodbine,' &c., &c.: they were all here, the fairies of the Court of Titania.

Both teamsters had deep, full, rich voices, and both had a regular routine in their eloquence; they always began in a gentle, loveable way, with—

'Now then, Daisy! Get up, Bluebell! D—— your —— eyes! Cowslip, ain't you going to budge.' Then the voice rose, and roared, while the forest re-echoed with the most euphonious string of coined and acknowledged oaths ever heard from the tobacco-stained lips of blasphemous man. Nothing seemed too sacred or far-fetched to tack on as adjectives to these pretty, fairy-like names; while all the forest-birds seemed to pause in horror at the richly-resounding outpourings.

I watched the faces of these men when at their worst, and was surprised to see how simple and benevolent they looked all the while; they did not appear to be in the slightest degree more excited than the animals at whose devoted heads their anathemas were flung. I also observed that, after they had paused to swing round their heads the

long stock-whips, preparatory to landing the lash on some sensitive part of the leaders' sides, they began again in the soft tones just before the whip cracked ; so that it seemed natural for the bullocks to prefer harsh words without accompaniment to tender tones with.

I believe that it is now considered a settled point of religion, even amongst bishops, that the swearing of a bullock-driver is not to be regarded as a breach of the Third Commandment, but that he must blaspheme if he wishes to be understood or respected by his team. It is said that their devilish minds cannot understand any other language, and that ordinary oaths will not answer in their case ; that they are most epicurean in their tastes in this direction, and never will budge an inch unless some word specially blood-curdling is pitched at their ears : then, if it is fresh enough and revolting enough to stir up their torpid livers, they try to make an effort forwards.

The leaders of the teams are not generally chosen to fill these posts of honour as a token of regard ; it is, rather, a mark of hatred, for they get most of the whacks, and generally stand as the representative of some enemy of their owners. In such instances they are christened afresh by the name of this enemy, and enjoy life as he might do if he were in their place.

It is one of the common fallacies to consider a bullock-driver as an irreligious and even brutal member of society. This is quite as erroneous as to conclude that a butcher must be a ferocious character. Any one running away with this idea ought to stop until they have seen some of these worthies at church or chapel, or in the bosoms of their families, to know how devout they can be *after work is over*. But all this does not interfere in the slightest degree with their business or sense of duty towards the cattle under their charge ; indeed, if you have patience to listen to their flowery harangues for five minutes, you will be astonished at the extent of their Scriptural knowledge, and the names of ancient and sacred celebrities with which they are on intimate terms. A well-bred bullock likes to hear all about Moses and Aaron, with proper prefixes, while he is calmly resting by the way.

Half-way up the hill is a sawmill belonging to the gentleman we are about to visit, and, a little farther on, his selection, one of the most delightful and artistically-arranged homesteads that I ever saw in my life. He has just thinned out the trees on his estate, so as to let his cows and sheep move about with ease, without spoiling the picture, and sown it all over with good feeding-grass. The master is from home when we make our call, but the lady of the house receives us both as if I had been an old friend also, forces us to stay to dinner, and, while it is being prepared, guides us over the ground, pointing out the improvements they have made, and where they have left Nature alone.

Down a little glen filled with wattles, gum and fern trees, we plunge after her over rustic bridges, while the crystal stream rushes below—a place for



A Bullock Team.

all the world like the Rhymer's Glen at Melrose, only much finer; for, whereas the great novelist made his glen, my charming hostess and her husband found this one all made for them. Surprises meet us at every turn—now a miniature waterfall, now a fallen tree, now a rustic bridge or stepping-stones to take us over; so we follow on, and

climb upwards, until we reach the crest of the partly-cleared hill, to find a 'rest-and-be-thankful' seat, and a beautiful, extensive landscape over the forest-tops, framed in with a foreground of tall gum trees.

After that we go through the orchard, where the apples and pears are hanging thickly, into her flower and kitchen gardens, to admire the taste of the one and the well-cared-for, prolific order of the other; then through the poultry-yards and piggeries; and, lastly, into her dairy and the stables. All is perfect, rural, and ideal here, and the last touch is given when, after a good dinner, we sit outside on the verandah smoking our pipes, while the lady sits inside her drawing-room, and plays and sings to us through the open doors.

It is late in the afternoon when we get back to Yarragon. The sports are over in the village, and the bars once more crammed with visitors. A hasty tea, then I say good-bye to my young friend, and start by the night-train for Dandenong and Berwick.

I was told not to miss seeing the Fern-tree Gully and the Dandenong Ranges, so I religiously went over both places, and certainly had no reason to think that my time was misspent; for the extended range of scenery from the hotel called Beaconsfield House was uncommonly magnificent, both in colour and outline.

We drove from Berwick by coach to Beaconsfield House, on the Dandenong Ranges, at first along a fine, open country road, with hedges and fences lining it, and trees beyond; then up the mountain sides, all amongst cool woodlands, ascending upwards until summer changed to autumn, and the air became so cold that I was obliged to button on the overcoat which the driver lent me when he saw me shivering.

The people go to Beaconsfield House to recruit during the very hot weather. It is built on a large scale, yet not too overpoweringly grand for comfort; and the inmates all vied with each other in showing me kindness during the hour or so that I spent there.

A fresh, highland breeze greeted me as I looked over the vast panorama from the verandah, with the Dande-

nong Ranges under my eyes, and the waters of Port Phillip Bay in front; lap beyond lap of mountain and forest. It was my last look over Victoria for some months, during which time I was to traverse Queensland, and mix amongst the savages of Papua; and it was a noble, farewell look of swimming colours—sombre olive-greens blending into intense purple, again to fade away into cobalt-blues and delicate tones of liquid greys; dove-wings of headlands brooding over amethystine and crystal waters, the farthest-off distances just a delicious stain, and no more, against the opal sky.

Oh! the yearning for spirit-wings to fly which comes upon us as our eyes travel over the purity of such vast distances. It is then that we feel that we have souls which must live—that we do not perish like the beasts of the field. (But do they perish, either?) The instinct to soar is upon us; the inner wings of the soul are flapping against their narrow prison-walls. Are we caterpillars only, who must never progress beyond the chrysalis stage? An eagle is floating away in mid-distance—possibly, only a ravenous vulture peering downwards for prey; but he represents to us Eternity, as we look after him—Eternity, which seems so still, but which flies onward with such velocity.

I walk back from the Dandenongs towards Berwick, taking a circuit of the open country, sketch-bag on back, and enjoy such a lunch, put up by my Beaconsfield friends, as might last a backwoodsman for a week. Two weary 'sundowners' meet me on the way, and we squat together and finish it before we rise. Then they beg for a fill of my tobacco, and repay me by some of their experiences on the road. They are both long-bearded and much bepatched, leery, lazy, and contented with their lot. They have grown grey in the service of Laverna, and have not soiled their hands with work for many years, but have no care, for no winter chills trouble these loafers in Australia.

A sundowner is a gentleman who has all the instincts of the nobleman about him, but has been unfortunate in the choice of his parents; and so, in order to repair this cruel accident of birth, and imitate the lilies of the field, he rests



his body during the hours of daylight under the shadow of gum trees, with his swag beside him and pipe in mouth, waking up each evening, one hour before sundown, in order to hunt out some benevolent householder who may be induced to give him a supper and a bed. Like 'Skimpole,' his wants are few, and all his tendencies are towards poetry and gentility.

I am inclined to believe that, when a very refined aristocrat dies, he has to '—do his time' in the carcase of a sundowner: so that the death of the one means the birth of the other. Therefore, Australians, look out for a big increase in the ranks of your future sundowners, since La Grippe has taken off so many of our 'upper ten thousand' here lately. The soul of an atheist who is very positive in his opinions goes into the body of a colonial bullock—that is why these awful beasts of burden enjoy blasphemy so much.

It is a delightful walk back, with wayside glimpses of distant ranges for all the world like Borderland near Smaillholm Tower.

Long stretches of sunlit and shaded roads, lined with trees, and water-holes reflecting graceful trunks; a sweet glimpse of Berwick as I pass it by, and then I am back once more at Gessing's Gippsland Hotel, to pack up my traps and get ready for Sydney.

They have been a busy, yet pleasant, forty-four days which I have spent in Victoria. I have done and noticed a good deal, and enjoyed myself, during that month and a-half. I turn my back upon it with much regret, but look forward with pleasure to see it again, if I am not otherwise utilised by the economical New-Guinea cannibal.

CHAPTER XXII

NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney—Peculiar Dreams—Liverpool—The Innocent Lag—Two Snake Stories—The Paupers' Asylum.

If I had been in this world fifty years ago, and able to mark down notes then, I think I would have liked, above all things, to have described Sydney, its harbour, Heads, and murderous walls of rocks outside; but what is the use now, since it has been all done, times beyond number, already?

Therefore, since, fortunately or unfortunately, I was not born fifty years ago, I am going to pass over Sydney with a few words.

Do I think the harbour beautiful? Yes, surpassingly so; the most perfect and beautiful harbour that ever I saw in my life. Sydney Town? There is nothing any one can find fault with there, excepting the decorations upon the Post Office—the ginger-bread ironwork which some idiot has placed in front of the telegraph-wires by way of ornament and to cover these meshes—and the steam tramcars; and I think not even the most rabid lover of Sydney can object to my objections.

What remorseless rocks these are which greet us as we sail round the coast and look at the Devil's Gap, where the 'Dunbar' deposited her home-coming colonials so long ago! It almost takes us longer time than the seven miles' journey up the glassy harbour to forget the horror of these jagged Heads; but then, when we have forgotten the outside, how we can revel in the enervating luxury of those wooded islands, bays, and coves, with the snowy sands, and the palaces scattered about and rising out of their princely gardens!

We are in the land of the orange, the lemon, and the apricot! What does not grow in the orchards of Sydney need not be desired.

One difference I notice between the women of Sydney and Melbourne: the former are lilies, and the latter are roses,

There is an old clock on the wharf at Sydney which filled a remarkable place in my life once, years before I ever saw Sydney. I dreamt a dream in which years passed away, all full of action; the curious thing about this dream was that I forgot it entirely the next morning.

Time passed, and I visited Sydney, and left it. I remember I was just stepping aboard a Melbourne steamer when, glancing back, I saw this clock, with its square, wooden tower. Then a strange sensation came over me: I had seen the same tower, clock, even the hour the hands were pointing at, somewhere before. Where and when? Then, as if a curtain had been lifted up from before a hidden picture, something seemed to be lifted up from my mind, and the long-ago dream flashed out as vividly as a negative when it is first developed in the dark-room. I saw every detail, and knew that I had lived through every incident in my dream. That old wooden clock had been the developer of my vision, for it had closed my dream, the time-hands pointing to the hour when it ended; my spirit had been sketching all round Sydney before the brain knew anything about it.

We all know about dreams which seem as warnings; but it is those dreams which anticipate things, yet signify nothing, which puzzle me mostly. Once in Edinburgh I dreamt that, going through St. Patrick Square, I met a very commonplace woman, whom I looked back at after we passed; she was also looking back, and our eyes met, I looking indifferently, she with a frown. Next day I chanced to pass through that square, met the woman of my dream (whom I had never seen before), and got scowled upon for my pains when I looked back and our eyes met.

Five nights after this I dreamt once more that I was passing along the Bridges, when the same woman rushed hurriedly out of a shop right against me, and rudely asked me who I was pushing against. The following day that dream was repeated in every particular, even to the injured question.

Two weeks afterwards I dreamt for the third time that I was passing along a street—it seemed to be late at night, for few people were about—that I looked across the street,

and saw my dream-woman dragging a drunken man along ; our glances once more met, and again she treated me to a scowl of hatred.

Next night I was going home from a party and had to pass through this particular street. There, just as I had dreamt it, I looked across to see this woman dragging along the drunken man (probably her husband) and to be received with the evil glance.

And then these very senseless dreams ended abruptly ; I never saw or dreamt about her any more. What did it all mean, and for what earthly or supernatural purpose had I dreamt it ?

Sydney is a very charming place—the most ancient in the colonies—where any one with ordinary appreciation of beauty may go on dreaming his life away, and never wish to see the outside of the Heads. For particulars about it, read Mr. Anthony Trollope's description ; when it could make such a writer as he is grow almost poetic over its loveliness, it may well rank against the world.

I do not know what prompted me to take Liverpool as my first resting-place in this Colony, unless that it was one of the very oldest places in the Colonies and an early Government settlement. I wanted a quiet place to work up, for I was not feeling well, and they told me that Liverpool was a quiet enough place now, whatever it had been in the good old days of lagdom.

It stands on the river George, has several places of worship, and boasts of a benevolent asylum for paupers, a relic of olden times and British institutions (there are no pauper establishments yet in Victoria, that I saw). There is also a fine paper-mill here, over which I went, looking with interest on the process of transforming the foul rags of paupers and ratepayers into sugar-paper.

I saw an aloe tree here just on the point of celebrating its jubilee by blooming ; it grew on the banks of the river George, amongst the prickly pears and the cracked clay banks, like a poet musing in a brickfield. The rains had not yet come to beautify the country, so that there was a decided cakiness and lack of greenery all about which struck me painfully. After my late experience of Gippsland, nothing

quite satisfied me ; but then I was not well, which perhaps accounted for it.

Then I fell ill, lay down, and had to get a doctor, who was one of the most generous and liberal-minded of medical men ; he gave me a sleeping-draught, and after that a pick-me-up, which carried me right over the rest of my journey. I kept his prescription to help me with my notes, for it has got the official stamp of a chemist in every one of the towns I visited in the colonies, with the dates attached ; a most useful prescription I have found it to be.

My doctor was very much against heavy drinking and over-smoking, yet he did not altogether advocate total abstinence. Strict moderation was his motto : he always limited his patients to fourteen glasses of whisky per day, and not more than two dozen pipes.

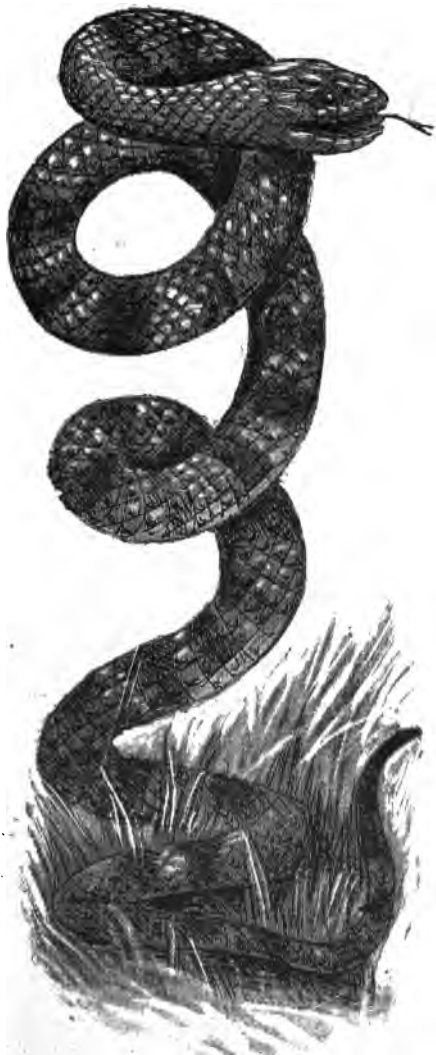
There was an old friend with me at the time he gave me this advice. This friend was beginning to fear that he was falling into intemperate habits, and inclined to forswear all intoxicating liquors, but when he heard this his face brightened up wonderfully, and he cried gleefully, ' Dash it all ! what was I bothering about ? I'm all right, for I can't stand more than eight in one day.'

I heard a story here which shows how plucky the colonial boys can be. All the Australian boys are taught the necessity of guarding against snake-bites, and how to treat them, as a necessary part of their education. Two little fellows, six and eight years old, had gone into the bush to play ; the smaller one, chasing a rabbit into a hole, pushed in his hand and brought it back quickly, with the head of a most venomous snake attached to one of the fingers.

' Quick, Charley !' he cried, putting down his hand on a stump close by. ' Chop off my finger—the snake has bitten it.'

Charley, without a pause, lifted his axe and chopped, not only the damaged finger, but two of the others as well. Then they both ran straight into town, over a mile distant, to a chemist, who plunged the bleeding stumps into the strongest ammonia and afterwards dressed the hand. Think of that, my staunch young Briton, and then try the effect of ammonia on a little scratch—and this hero was only six years old.

That is what young Australia can do when he sees the necessity of it.



Another story from New South Wales about snakes. A young lady, high-bred and wealthy, was walking along the highway when she saw a snake bite a vulgar tramp somewhere about the thigh. She sprang forward, killed the reptile with her parasol, and then, borrowing the tramp's pocket-knife, knelt down, slit open his ragged trousers, and cutting a deep St. Andrew's Cross in his leg, applied her pretty lips to the wound, sucked out all the poisoned blood, and so saved his miserable life. I don't think any of the local poets ever made a poem on this action, yet when Australia's bard is born an incident of common life like this rightly treated will be quite enough to roll his name down time and make a classic for the colonies.

As I grew better at Liverpool, and more

able to notice things, I got acquainted with an ancient lag who kept a shop where I bought writing-paper and such things. He did not deny that he had been sent out free of expense, but, like most of the convicts, said he had been innocent of the crime charged to him; he had been a lifer for stealing, but was most unjustly charged.

'You see, I was a working chap in Birmingham,' he told me, without mentioning his particular trade. 'An honest working chap and a married man. Well, one night when I had naught to do, I thought I'd go down to the town and have a drink. My old woman says, "No, don't go to-night, Jim"; but I says "Yes," and I went, more to my sorrow.

'Well, I goes into a pub where I was known and calls for a pot o' beer, and while I was a-drinking of it a gal comes in as I knows, with a bloke alongside of her. I didn't object to that—how could I, with my own gal at home?—but I was frisky-like, as you might say, being a young fellow, so thought to have a little joke, and, going gently over to the fireplace, I picks up a bit of glowing cinder, and drops it down her neck right in front. Lord! I didn't mean no harm, but just a joke, as it was.

'Well, you wouldn't believe it, but that 'erə gal sets up a yell enough to frighten the dead when she feels the hot cinder pinching her, and her bloke hit straight out at me and knocks me down.

'No man alive could stand the like o' that, so I just jumps up again, takes hold of the heavy iron fender, and hits him over the nut, splitting it like a turmit, and bolts out, with the landlord and the rest after me full swing.

'The bloke died; but perhaps it 'ud gone all right with me at my trial, only in my hurry I carried away the fender with me. At any rate, I was copped, clapped in quod, and that cursed fender brought against me; they lagged chaps for stealing in them days, so I was lagged, and here I be, none the worse of it after all!'

'Then you were not tried for murder?'

'No, they forgot all about that, for it was an accident. I was sentenced for life for stealing that cussed fender, a thing I was as innocent of as the babe unborn.'

I looked with admiration upon this innocent old convict, while I meditated upon the glorious laws of my native land.

‘And what about your wife?’

‘Oh, she joined me arter a year or two, and we set up in business here and did fairly well. She died two years ago.’

Good old man, spending the residue of thy days under the shadow of the Benevolent Pauper Establishment, and wise old law which permitted thee to do so! Thou hadst not yet been able to appreciate to the full the whole point and humour of thy merry cinder joke; I expect thou art waiting for the martyr’s reward in another state!

That there should be any necessity for Asylums for the Destitute in Australia is to me a source of profound astonishment. In England the matter is different. Our iniquitous Game Laws prevent the poor man from helping himself to the food which God has created for him, therefore it is but fair on the part of the men who rob the poor man of his heaven-created food to keep him in some other fashion. In Australia there are no Game Laws, therefore there is no necessity for any man to accept charity, or be a pauper; he has only to go out and hunt, as the savage does, for his living. Again, in England winter reigns over half the year, demoralising the bravest of independent spirits. In Australia there are no winters to lock a man out of work, and freeze his wife or children; therefore the sight of such a place as this Paupers’ Asylum maddened me that people could allow themselves to be so degraded in such a land. It is only fit for boorish serfs and unredeemed convicted criminals, not for free men who have the rare fortune to claim such a land as this for their birthright.

For what have we old worldlings to be proud about, compared to them? These ruined castles where our masters lived, and rode over us? These monasteries where men were glad to hide their degraded heads and seek sanctuary from outrage and death or worse? These titles which represent robbery or prostitution? These laws which were framed to grind down the poor? These forbidden fields, moors, mountains, valleys, rivers, and lakes? What have we, the poor, to be proud of as Britons? What have the masters

to be proud about, when compared to the heir by birth to this new and untrammelled land ?

I was tramping along the side of the George River thinking these democratic thoughts, when I came across a family of miserable-looking aborigines. Two of the men were standing up fighting over the remains of a bottle of rum which one of the gins held in her hand ; they boxed each other after the fashion of English prize-fighters, because it was English produce they were fighting about. It was an interesting sight to see these poor outcasts observing so rigidly the laws of the ring, and as I watched them my enthusiasm about colonial birthright cooled down considerably. Yet after all it is a grand country to be born in, no matter how it was gained.

There is an appearance of oldness about Liverpool which is very taking to the artistic eye after the new-fashioned towns I have been going through—a ramshackle air about the houses, with weatherboard and whitewashed walls mixing about. The house where I lived was delightful, with chimneys and walls at all sorts of angles, and creepers clinging about the irregularities, rare cacti in flower, blackthorn and different varieties of wattle, arbours of vines, with the black grapes hanging in heavy clusters, and over all this a sleepy air of inactivity which suited my convalescent mood exactly.

I was amused at the monument which some of the convicts had erected in memory of Captain Cook, and the original spelling upon it : ‘ Erected in 1853 during the time of Charles A. FitzRoy, K.C.B., and Governor General xiii. to Captain Cook who was killed at the *Sandwich* Islands, 14th February, A.B. 1770.’ The Public Gardens at Liverpool are as yet only pegged off, although the town has been so long in existence ; they move leisurely along in this part of the Colony.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONVICTS

Some Reasons for Leaving out New South Wales—Mittagong—Berrima—Convicts—Bowral—A Walk to South Head.

I do not know where the place is, however insignificant, that some reader will not be found who considers it the most interesting portion of the globe. If I do not have so much to say about New South Wales as of some of the other portions of Australia, it is not that I thought less of it, but rather because it has been already so much done by others that there was very little left for me to do outside the groove, and as I went over the land during 1886 for a special purpose, every hour had to be considered. Also, as I am writing this book for a special purpose now, which is to make my readers acquainted with those portions of the land which are still open to them, I wish to hasten away from this Colony as fast as possible, it being of no earthly use to them now, as it is a land already possessed, with no room for outsiders, unless they are specialists in some walk of life.

I do not want to tempt any poor man to go out to Sydney thinking to make his fortune there, for, candidly, I don't think he will, any more than he might in London. When I want to lure you on, ye seekers after comfort and happiness, it is the young unmarried women I intend to describe. Neither you nor I have any right to talk about the perfections of the wedded and done for. Leave all that for the husbands, if they like.

New South Wales is married and possessed, therefore out of our reach. Years ago, when she was open for competition, seductive was not the word for her exquisite perfections—but those days are all past for outsiders, so let us lift our hats respectfully, and pass on to pastures new.

Mittagong—my next halting-place—I took because a Sydney acquaintance advised me not to miss it. Why? Because here he had courted and won his wife, and never could forget the loveliness of the 'Ten Foot Gully,' where she murmured 'Yes.'

I went there on his recommendation, and because it was near Berrima, where the strictest of colonial prisons stood. I had heard about it often, as one hears about the Bastille or Inquisition. Here was the bed of roses and the thumb exercise practised, or, worst of all to mindless criminals, the 'black hole.'

If a criminal was extra-troublesome at other prisons, they threatened him with Berrima, which was generally enough to subdue the most case-hardened, and make a lamb of him.

Berrima stands on the Wingecarribee River, at an elevation of about 2,300 feet above the sea. Therefore it is, as might be expected, a very healthy locality, in the midst of a very rich mineral district—copper, coal, and iron ore. It is a small township, with about 450 inhabitants, for people, as a rule, do not enjoy themselves in the immediate vicinity of such a prison. This prison is conducted on the 'silent system,' *i.e.*, captives are not allowed to speak. If they dared to break the rules, they were punished so severely that few ever repeat the offence. This is the very last place where criminals are sent, and only the most desperate. They are cured here completely of their moral diseases, they tell me. Darkness appears to be the terror of those crime-children.

I tried the 'black hole' for twenty-four hours, but on me it had no effect beyond that of making me fall asleep, and so giving my eyes and brain a good rest. It was so soothingly and completely dark that I never knew when my eyelids closed over my eyes. I only know that I was roused up, much the better for my voluntary incarceration, by the warden's coming in and saying 'Time's up.'

Perhaps because it was *voluntary* may be the reason why I did not suffer. I have tried to imagine the state of a prisoner who has been condemned, say, for life, but found it well-nigh impossible—the sentence first gradually unfolding all its horrors, no more effort required for daily bread; the future provided for, with a daily routine which will never be varied—each morning to be roused up by the clanging of the prison bells; then the blankets to fold up, according to rule, and the cell to tidy; then out to the

exercise-yard, or the labour-shops; breakfast and exercise, dinner and exercise, tea and bed; while all through the night, the hourly waking up as the warders march along the passages and shout, 'All's well.'

What has been taken from him in exchange for this daily providing for the animal? Liberty—the being able to do and go where he likes; hope—the incentive to exertion; love—he must live for ever mateless, with all his natural desires raging like devils within him.

I have gone through a good many colonial prisons, and talked to all kinds of criminals, from the gentlemanly forger, swindler, and medical side-walker, down through the fine gradations of bushranger, housebreaker, pickpocket, and sneak kinchin man.

Once I talked to a young fellow who had been taken in the heyday of his professional success as a gentleman-swindler and Don Juan. He went mad after a fortnight of the monkish routine, and passed twelve months in a beautiful land, which ordinary unimaginative mortals can never hope to enter into.

'It was the want of the wine and the women did it. Lord! I had the best of them both—ladies who hung on to me like worshippers before the shrine of a saint, wines of the rarest vintage, cooking the most expensive, and, sweeter than all, paid for eagerly by the fools who let me dip into their purses as I liked.

'Then, with a bang, it was all shut off—fine clothes, exquisite perfumes, love-notes pouring in each morning for assignments of the night, soft arms and tender whispers in the moonlight, gleeful nights, when one had to yell out with the intensity of the moment; for into every moment was crammed the excitement of weeks of an ordinary man's life, not knowing whether it might be the last or not. It was like rushing round in a whirlpool at full speed, clutching at every pleasure as it spun past, and bolting it down as quickly as possible, never thinking, or attempting to economise either vitality or dinner.'

'There you were an ass,' observed his cynical but calm prison chum, a bank-robber, whose plunder had never been discovered, although he had been convicted. 'I always

considered the future, and the consequences. When the job came off which I am now serving for, I married the woman who had helped me, so that she could have no interest in giving the swag up to another fellow, and put her away. When I come out, she'll have to give an account of it, you bet. Meantime, I can afford to lie by.'

'But you were always cold-blooded, Bob,' answered the swindler, and then went on: 'I spent one fortnight in hell, and then something snapped inside my brain, and in a second I had all my desires gratified—lovely girls, delicious wines, the best of cookery. I had only to wish for a thing, and it was mine; want to see a place, and I was in it. Everyone received me with love and admiration. I tell you what: if all madmen are like I was, I envy them their heaven, for I never spent such a happy time in my life as I did in that lunatic asylum over there. It was exactly what a fellow may have in the other world, if the gaol-parson is to be credited.'

I was looking over the governor's garden of one of the prisons, when an old prisoner who acted as gardener hobbled forward, and asked for permission to speak to me, which the good-natured official granted. This old man was a lifer, and had been charged with murdering his fellow-shipmate. He had already passed fifty-two years of his life in different gaols throughout the Colonies.

He told me his story in a few words. Fifty-two years ago he had come out as apprentice in a ship to Sydney. The first night after they landed, one of the other lads and himself were going along the street, when they were suddenly set on by a party of roughs, and, before he could defend himself, he was knocked to the ground insensible.

When he recovered himself, he found that he was in prison, charged with the murder of his friend. The roughs had all decamped on hearing the police coming. He had been found beside his companion, both with blood-stained sticks in their hands. It was supposed that the two had quarrelled and fought, and that his blow had been fatal.

For more than half a century the old man had not spoken to a woman, and before that only as a mere boy. His

request was a simple and pathetic one: he had heard that I was an artist; would the governor let me draw him a woman, and afterwards let him keep the sketch? The governor nodded his head, and turned his back upon us while I sketched him the picture he wanted on a leaf of my sketch-book, altering it according to his suggestions, for the old man had an ideal which he wanted realised.

When it was done, he took it from me with trembling hands, his eyes bright with excitement, and after a long, greedy look, he opened his shirt-front, and put it, face inwards, against his heart; and then, thanking me, with a husky voice, hobbled back again to his spade and barrow.

Many prisoners are discovered with the likenesses of supposed lovers tattooed upon their arms; this leads to their identification often. Yet, for all that, they would not want the comfort gleaned from it in their lonely hours; it is their only consolation in gaol, and their greatest punishment. To a sailor who has been shut up for a long voyage with only men, and a prisoner who has just finished his sentence, the first woman they meet, no matter how old or ugly, is the most lovely object they can think about; at such a moment the most hardened criminal might easily be converted if the angel who meets him as he rushes out free is a good one. He is dragged into lower depths if she is a devil.

I looked over silent Berrima in the twilight as we drove away. All the sky was luminous and yellow-tinted, while the prison lay, with its surrounding tumbledown out-houses and palings, gloomy and sombre; not a stir in the sky or from these walls to break the awful spell—it was a scene of soundless horror and patient crime, waiting on the moment of liberty and revenge.

Mittagong lies also on the high level. Being 2,069 feet above the sea, with a cool air always, and very keen nights and mornings, we were glad to draw close to the big log fire during the evening. I was now beginning to feel the necessity for my thick winter overcoat; I had unpacked it at Sydney, and had to wear it each night I went out, right up to Thursday Island. In the semi-tropics, particularly, some of the nights are very cold.

The bush and gullies round Mittagong are very picturesque and rugged: not so much vegetation and greenery as in Victoria, but more rugged, rocky, and stern, after the Salvator Rosa school of pictures—places where tramps in their rags and masked bushrangers would be appropriate. I did not meet any bushrangers at this part, although I have seen them in past days; but I saw the camp-fire of a swagsman, one evening, through the trees, with a fine weird effect of lurid colour and deep shadow.

I walked over, one afternoon, to the pretty town of Bowral, a place of about 800 inhabitants, which nestles amongst a perfect garden of fruit-trees—orchards of apples principally—with nice, old-fashioned farms lying about the well-cultivated country.

I have seen all that I want to see for the present on the Southern Railway, and feel once more ready for work and braced up by the mountain air, so take the train back to sweet Sydney by the sea, the queen of ocean cities and home of luxurious palaces.

What an awful monster that is which comes roaring along the main street, vomiting out clouds of dirty smoke over this fair, sunlit city; a ruthless monster, which demands its weekly victims as sacrifice, either unwary man, woman, or child, who may trip and fall before its approach; as ugly and reasonless a malformation as ever Frankenstein raised up and let loose—the steam tramcar.

It is going out towards Woolloomooloo, so I jump on board, in spite of my hatred for it, and it goes on, snorting and defiling the air. I have a couple of days more on my hands before I can go to the Blue Mountains, therefore I mean to pass them amongst the many bays with which the harbour is scalloped out. I have already gone through the Domain, the Botanical Gardens, and Lady Macquarie's Chair and convict-carved walk; I want now to get the length of the South Heads.

I leave the car near Woolloomooloo, walk on through Paddington and Woolahra, and strike away from streets by Double Bay. What a delightful walk as one goes down the steep hill to the harbour—promontories, heads, islands, and sails of all sizes and shapes dotting the blue

waters, while the fore part is filled in with the feathery tops of gardens!

Next I pass by Rose Bay, and get a delicious peep of it through a broken rail all covered with weeds and tendrils of honeysuckles and wild briar; ships, yachts, and buildings, peeping out of the richest of foliage, are everywhere to be seen, with rocky promontories and golden sands, and clusters of sea-birds waddling about.

Then I come to shady portions of the way, where high rocks of sandstone rise up and shade the road, all wet and glistening with the moisture which drops from the wooded banks above. Here is a stone horse-trough, into which a crystal stream pours constantly from an iron spout, and, running over, trickles along the roadside among the rushes with a pleasant sound.

After this the road begins to rise as I approach the Lighthouse, and I look over a stretch of scrubland, rocks, and swampy ponds, to the North Heads, dark and stern, with Watson's Bay below me, and glimpses of the open sea beyond.

I can never forget the 'Dunbar' as I look over these Heads. Long ago I used to ride over to them on horseback, particularly if there was a storm brewing. How I used to love flying along these roads about midnight, with the lightning and wild-fire playing about, and the poor horse snorting with terror at the flashes. On I used to urge him, till I could look over the cruel Heads at the surf breaking, 350 feet below me, at the foot of that upright wall, over which we perched—that horror-stricken steed and I. Then, when I turned him about as on a pivot, and he flew as if the demon was behind him until he reached his stables—oh! that was exhilaration. All the while I was thinking, with sympathetic creeping of the flesh, upon those poor bodies which the cruel breakers dashed to and from the iron barriers, while the ravenous sharks tore the flesh in long strips from the bones. It was pitiful, the after-effects of the 'Dunbar.' Once I met a mad woman whose wits had turned the day after the wreck; her only son was amongst the passengers, and he was coming home to comfort his widowed, solitary mother, after a brilliant career at Oxford,

To send him there she had spent most of the insurance money which her dead husband had left her.

Well, they brought the poor woman a shapely arm to identify—all that remained of her pride after the sharks had finished their Heaven-appointed work. Ah! those tell-tale, fatal tattooings which reckless boys sometimes will do at school; he had the pirate's symbol tattooed upon his forearm—a bungled skull and crossbones—and the sharks had ignored that scar; so, when this piece of stamped humanity was handed up to the poor woman who had borne it, God kindly quenched her intellect. I used to meet her at times upon the South Heads, waiting, and looking out with a hopeful and happy smile upon the coming of the expected ship, 'Dunbar.'

'When my boy comes home I'll be all right, for he has won all the prizes at Oxford.'

Happy old woman! I wonder how much her son will think of owl-like Oxford, and all his poll-parrot prizes, when he welcomes this martyr to the land of Beulah?

It was the hour of sunset as I turned back towards Sydney. I got a glimpse of the harbour, islands, headland, and city, with the Blue Mountains behind, just as the sun was dipping below; and when I was half-way down the hill towards the horse-trough and varnished rocks, a glimpse through the openings of the trees, of water, shipping, fort, and spires.

A golden vision, like that of St. John of Patmos, this was—Sydney, like a queenly bride, arrayed in purple, against a canopy of jewels set in massive gold, at her feet the fort, and islands, and pavement of burnished ore. Unlike Anthony Trollope, I am not a post-office man, so that I cannot think of foreign stamps at this moment, or compare this vision to Naples, Dublin Bay, the Bay of Spezzia, New York, or the Cove of Cork; I can only think of St. John at Patmos, and cry, in my poetic passion, 'Jerusalem the New, thou hast arisen.'

CHAPTER XXIV

OLD SYDNEY

Old Days in Sydney—George Barrington—Convicts and their Masters—My Friend, the Sea Captain's, Yarn.

SYDNEY, being the oldest of the Australian cities, has, naturally, the most to boast about in the matter of history, and I daresay there is no locality in the world so richly-endowed with incidents and material for the novelist.

Those early days, when the country was divided into two distinct castes—freemen and convicts—are literally crammed with romantic and tragic stories, so that one has only to sit down and listen to some of the old natives, and hear their reminiscences of childhood, to know the after-history of some of England's greatest criminals. They all came out here to retire from public life, and in most instances to redeem their past; although, of course, there were exceptions to this golden rule, who left almost unparalleled records of atrocious and revolting crimes before they expiated their offences on the old Gallows Hill.

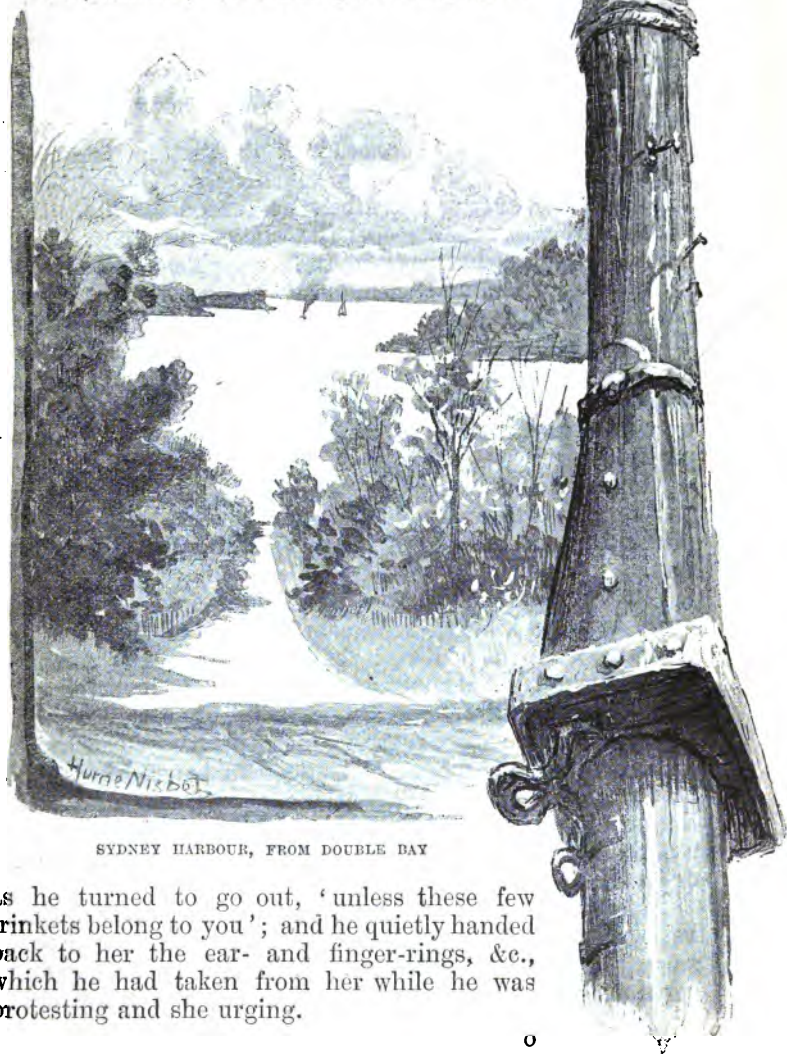
Here the gay and fascinating pickpocket, George Barrington, came out to end his life as a most exemplary citizen and magistrate. There is a story told of his remarkable dexterity which does not reflect much to the credit of the lady who put his *gifts* to the test. Shortly after his arrival, while he was acting as servant to one of the officials, his mistress sent for him, and telling him that, although she had heard wonderful tales of his quickness, she did not believe the half of them, defied him to rob her as she then stood. Polite George bowed, and said that she was quite right; it was impossible for even the most adroit thief to steal from the person of such a sharp-eyed lady as she was.

‘But I’d like if you would try.’

George protested, while she urged him to give her a sample of his skill. At last she lost her temper, and ordered him back to his work, telling him that the people

must have been very simple who could allow themselves to be robbed by such a poor pick-pocket as he must have been.

'Yes, madam,' said George, bowing again



SYDNEY HARBOUR, FROM DOUBLE BAY

as he turned to go out, 'unless these few trinkets belong to you'; and he quietly handed back to her the ear- and finger-rings, &c., which he had taken from her while he was protesting and she urging.

The lady was struck dumb for a moment, as she took back her property; then, with a face of scarlet, she observed: 'You are a little too clever for my service, Mr. George Barrington.'

That same day George received his reward by being sent back to prison-duty. It was the last time he exhibited his powers; after that he settled down to rectitude, and gradually grew to be respected both by colonial society and the Government.

An old sea-captain once told me that he had made several voyages to Sydney with convicts. Once he took out a housebreaker who had been sentenced for life. Next voyage he had as a passenger the wife of this convict; she came out, paying her passage, to be near her husband. The third voyage, he found them both doing a thriving trade, she as the mistress, and her husband as her 'hired servant.' He made a few more voyages after this, to find them better off every time he called upon them. The last time he saw them the wife was owner of half a street and a wealthy woman, her consort-servant likewise enjoying her prosperity.

In such a case as this the wife had the best of the position, as she could always send her husband back to prison and punishment if he misbehaved himself in any way.

In the olden days 'free colonials' could always hire convicts to work for them in consideration of their keeping them in food and clothes: that was how many fortunes were built up. It was always the aim of a convicted man to get 'hired' out, if he could, as it meant more liberty and comfort; while he had a strong incentive to good behaviour in the fact of 'punishment' being held before him: all a master had to do was to give the offending servant a polite line to the governor of the jail, which he had to deliver, as a schoolboy does, and get his punishment—either the 'cat' or be sent back to the chain-gang.

Of course, this sort of absolute mastery over human beings could not be good for the owners, any more than slavery can be for the drivers. It tended to develop even generous men and women into tyrants, and make cruel

minds more brutal. I have seen the daughters of convict-owners, who had grown up amongst the bondsmen, think no more of striking an old servant on the face with their whips or canes for some carelessness than one might of whipping a disobedient hound—a treatment which the ‘lags’ much preferred to being dismissed. But it sends a curious thrill through the onlooker, who has not been used to this sort of thing, to see a refined, tender-hearted lady beat her old gardener or groom, while he receives the blow meekly. However, the young people of the Colonies have outgrown this; it is only their mothers or grandmothers who are apt in moments of abstraction to hark back to the olden habits.

Still, with all their social disadvantages, the Sydney people were a generous, simple-minded, hospitable race, very free and kind to strangers who came out without the prison slur upon them. A great number of the convicts were men of rank—such as Sir Henry Hayes, a gentleman from Cork, who was transported for attempting to win a wife, like the ancient Romans, by stealing her, and who, like St. Patrick, banished snakes from his estate at Vacluse, near South Head, by importing a cargo of Irish soil, which he put in a circle round his cottage. Old settlers affirm that no snake has ever been seen since that time near this charmed circle; and I never saw one there, although all round this country the black and other snakes used to be pretty plentiful. Political prisoners were always regarded by the colonials in quite a different light to criminals, and were allowed social advantages which the others were debarred from.

My old friend, the sea-captain, had, in his young days, gained a wife—one of the Sydney belles—after a long and obstinate struggle between him and her father. He had not kept the conditions which his father-in-law had laid down before giving his unwilling consent at last, which were that he must stay ashore; for when I met him he was still traversing the briny, with his wife by his side, as master and mistress of a merchantman.

She was then over seventy years old, tall and upright, in spite of the service she had seen. She had sailed all over the world, and her shapely figure had been a familiar

sight for the past forty years to harbour-masters of every port. She was known as the Commodore, and her husband as Captain William Saunders. The Commodore, at the date I saw her, was just beginning to feel the hand of Time. She suffered from rheumatics, and twinges from an old flying-snake bite which she had got at some out-of-the-way corner where snakes fly about like butterflies in other parts. But she was stately and aristocratic, for she had come of a grand old blue-blooded family, and still showed traces of her vanished beauty.

Her husband used to say that he had been the most unlucky man in the world before she had changed it for him; since that time all had been sunshine and success.

His first set-off as skipper might have disheartened many a bigger man; yet, what else he could have done than what he did (with the high sense of duty and honour which his seafaring father and grandfather had left behind them as about the only and sacred heirloom belonging to them to leave), I cannot say. He had been appointed to command a hulk that no other skipper could be induced to take charge of, to carry a cargo to the West Indies which the owners had heavily insured, with no thought of ever hearing word of again after it left the docks. But in spite of predictions and hopes, bad weather, and hands mutinying because for the best half of their watches they had to work the pumps, he did the voyage, and landed his charge safely at its destination, receiving as thanks for his exertions his discharge on his return home.

A discharged skipper may go a long time idle unless he can swallow pride, and take office as mate. William Saunders was proud enough, yet not too proud to work rather than loaf at home; so he took what turned up, and sailed for the next few years as mate—sometimes first, sometimes second—until again a chance turned up, like a ghostly gleam of wintry sunshine. He got the offer of a little schooner that had been built for Australia, and which wanted a captain to bring her out. Again his seacraft shone out conspicuously, and he had the honour of bringing safe and clean into Sydney Harbour the smallest ship that had ever ventured so far from England. This time Dame

Fortune actually cleared her brows as she looked at him: he was fêted and lionised by the impressionable Sydneyites, and might have had, for the asking, a dozen heiresses of influential merchants and landholders, who could not say 'No' to anything their daughters asked them for, and who, with a word, could have made even Dame Fortune turn her waterproof and laugh outright upon this young sea-captain.

But no; he never was in the way of doing a wise action if it came backed by worldly prudence: so instead of taking one of the dozen wealthy young ladies, as he ought to have done, he was mad enough to fall head and ears in love with a young belle who had for a parent one of the proudest men in the colonies—a man proud of his blood, being a younger branch of the home blue aristocracy; proud of his poverty—at least, what looked like poverty when compared with the wealth of each of the heiresses; proud of his daughter, as being something of himself; and, altogether, just the last sort of person William Saunders ought to have expected a grain of favour from in connection with his love affairs with that dark-eyed, aristocratic young maiden who, no more taking into consideration the obligations of her position than the young sailor had done his, not only encouraged his madness, but even surpassed him in the ardour of its display.

Day after day they met at picnics, and monopolised each other, until the heiresses became perfectly disgusted at her unmaidenly boldness. Night after night they met by the back-garden gate, under the lime and lemon trees, with the trumpet-flower bush wafting over them its subtle and intoxicating perfume, while the tarantula spun the heavy meshes of its web across the pathway, and the moon-rays fell over the scintillating dewdrops like the gleam from electric lamps; they in black shadow, whispering fond nothings, and her proud old parent crouching down amongst the fig-shaded, but very damp grass near the front gate, catching lumbago in his aristocratic back, and watching, with a fowling-piece charged with small shot in his hand, for the coming of the audacious young sailor-scamp who dared to look at his Mary, who, he thought, was at that moment

sitting in her own room, busy working at her antimacassar, with the blinds safely down and the lamp turned full on.

At last things came to such a pass that exasperation gave place to anxiety, and the old gentleman, finding remonstrance and storming equally ineffectual to bring the maiden to reason, next bethought him of interviewing the young man; so, for the time being hosting a flag of truce, he summoned the enemy to a conference. William came, listened to the father's attempts to bribe him off with an immovable countenance, and only roused up when the father called him 'a mercenary, time-serving sneak.'

'I'll soon prove that this is not my motive,' cried the impulsive youth, as he flounced out of the apartment; and, without so much as a good-bye to Mary, he took ship as second mate in a vessel bound for Calcutta, and sailed away, leaving the old gentleman more than content.

But his happiness soon changed to consternation when Miss Mary took to her bed, and would not, or could not, eat.

'What is wrong with her?' inquired the father.

'The mind,' replied the doctor.

'How can she be cured?' asked the father.

'By giving her what she wants, and setting her mind at rest,' responded the doctor.

'Impossible!' cried the father, aghast.

'Then she will die,' said the doctor.

And so it came to pass that, when William got to Calcutta, there was a letter for him, imploring him to come home and marry his sweetheart; the poor aristocratic papa had swallowed at one gulp that mighty pill, patrician pride, and, willy nilly, had to ask the young man he despised to take his daughter.

William replied that he was coming, and Mary straightway got well, as the wise medicine-man had predicted.

He transferred from the ship where he had been second mate to another bound for Sydney, taking the only available billet open—that of purser—and landed duly, master of the situation.

The old gentleman was just, if haughty, and having asked the young man in such a public manner to become his son-in-law, determined to make the best of a bad job, and, by

using his influence, render him as nearly her equal as he could. He put some money into a ship, lent his future son-in-law some to speculate in the same way, got all his friends to invest, and finally handed the ship and cargo over to William to navigate.

Several voyages were taken in safety between Auckland, Dunedin, and Sydney; the old gentleman had realised good profit by the concern, and William was in a fair way to become owner as well as skipper of the vessel. All that he made he invested in shares, so that at last he began to think that after another good voyage he could well afford to take a spell on shore, and make Miss Mary, Mrs. William Saunders. She was nothing at all loth to the arrangement, and, now that all obstacles were cleared, was as patient and as brave a sailor's lass as any one could wish to have.

Cheerily she went down the harbour with him, upon the day that he sailed, nearly to the Heads (no true-born Cornstalk will venture beyond). The sun shone down on the blue-green waters, which lapped the warm-tinted beaches of the many bays, as they passed down, breaking in little, white fringes amongst the pink and blue shells and tawny-coloured sands, the Gardens, with Lady Macquarie's rock-cut walk, appearing now and again between the thick foliage, which dipped into the sapphire, salt waves; past Pinchgut Fort, and the islands which cluster about in all directions, and Woolloomooloo Bay—the Bay so beautiful always to his eyes, where she, now beside him, used to wait so fondly upon his return, and where he knew he should find her, as Ulysses did his Penelope, ever tender and true.

Inside the Heads they parted, that warm afternoon, she giving him her tiny gold watch and slender chain in exchange for his more reliable and massive silver lever. They went through this foolish performance each time they parted; and as the slender arms hung for a moment, along with the thin thread of gold, about his sun-tanned, thick neck, William felt that he wanted no other chronometer to guide his ship or himself into port.

A brush on the moist lips with his bristling moustache, the mingling of rose aroma and Negro-head, and she is over the ship's side; a waving of handkerchief and brawny

hand, and the peaceful waters of Sydney Harbour are left behind, as the bows pitch outside amongst the ever-tossing breakers, and William Saunders, taking out a fresh quid, and pocketing his hands, looks seaward, the responsible skipper once more.

A fair wind and a cloudless sunset the first day out; a clustering of stars overhead, and the wake filled with glittering jewels the first night, as the officer on watch folded his arms, while he leaned against the rails smoking contentedly. A hot and oppressive morning the second day, with the sun looking brass-coloured, and the wind like the blast from a baker's oven. A night that no comfort could be gleaned from, as half the men lay helpless on the fore-castle deck, too much overcome with heat even to spin yarns.

Another day, and yet another, with the wind going down, more furnace-heated than ever; then the hurricane, that was a 'brickfielder' ashore, and the ineffable balm of that sudden downpour of tropic rain.

'Te Kotiro'—for so William Saunders had christened his vessel; he did not like to call her the 'Mary,' so he named her 'The Girl' instead, which meant the same thing—'Te Kotiro' made the voyage to Auckland, and thence to Dunedin, in safety, discharged her cargo, took a fresh stock for Melbourne, and then turned her head homewards, as she had so often done before under exactly the same circumstances, her skipper feeling at ease with himself and the whole world as he sat down in his cabin, reading over again one of Mary's long letters, and leisurely smoking his pipe while he read.

CHAPTER XXV

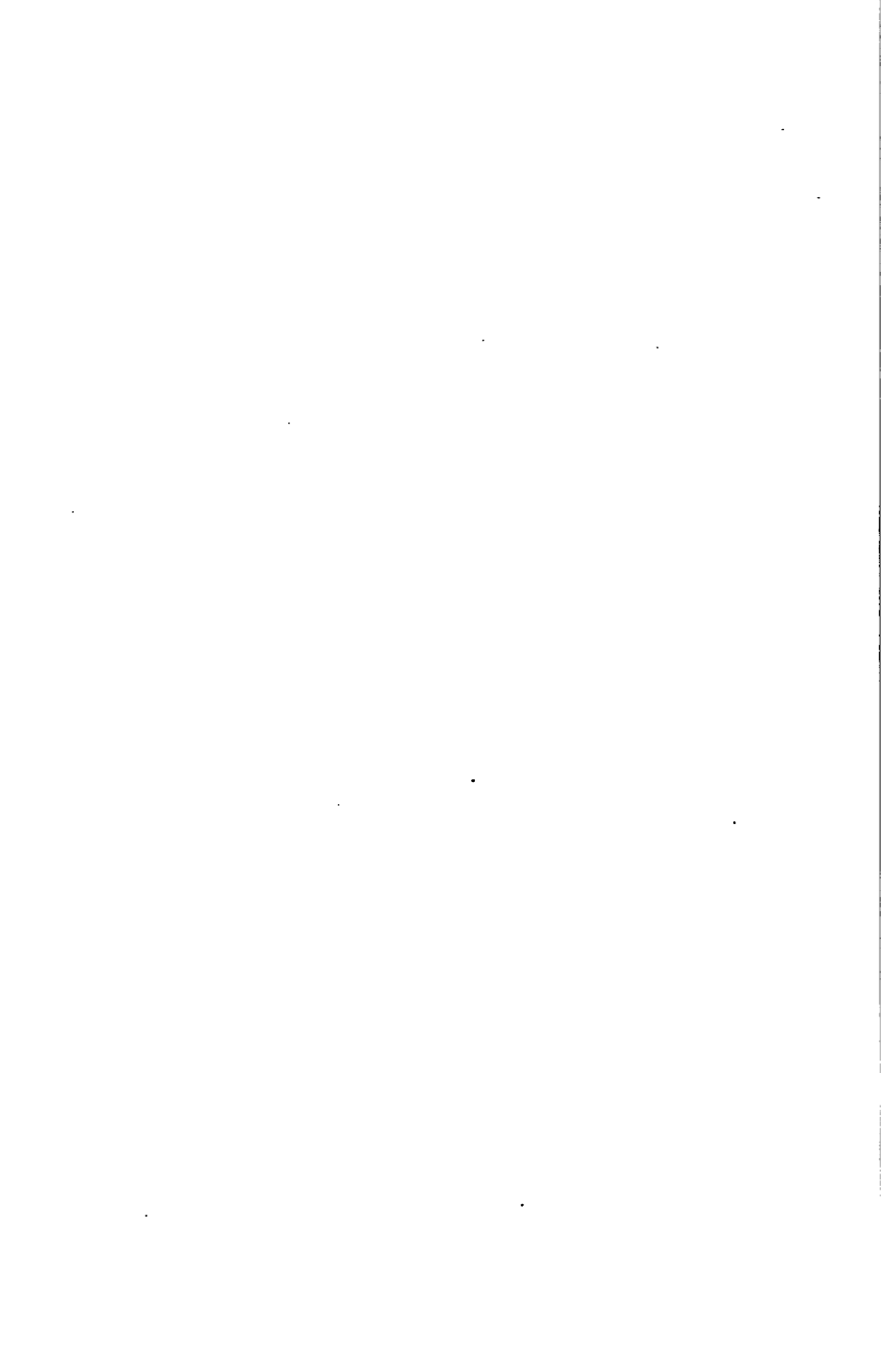
OLD SYDNEY (*continued*)

The Sea-Captain's Yarn (*continued*).

It was in the dog-watch that the blast came, when least expected. The breeze had been light, but steady enough, this afternoon, so that all sails were spread out to catch what



THE SEA-CAPTAIN'S YARN



they could of it, making speed enough just to keep them solid on their tracks. Half of the men lay upon their backs, looking skywards, watching the wreaths of smoke from their clays, as they rose straight up for a time, then were dashed aside and scattered into the blue darkness of the night, and listening, as they lay, to the sounds of a concertina which one of the lads swung lazily about, as he, too, lay upon his back : a fair sample of the many nights at sea when a sailor's life is worth living.

The man at the wheel was the only one who seemed to have a mission aboard, and a hand over now and again, as he watched the lighted compass-box, comprised the whole of his task, as he stood, in darkness, and looked down upon that reflected light, with the waves singing as they surged past the vessel's side. Above, around, and in front, spread the clear blue, growing from deep emerald to blue-black as the eye wandered from the horizon to the vaulted clear space, studded with glowing planets from the near worlds like little moons, to the great worlds, pricking out a pathway through infinity with needle-points. Now and again a shower of lights would descend like rockets, leaving trailings of lustre as they, seemingly, disappeared into the dark waters, and for a moment or two making the opalescent night appear densely black to the startled eyes. But behind the man at the wheel was rising, and covering up the stars rapidly, a haze like a dark brown curtain.

The third-mate's watch was nearly up ; he had gone over to the ladder which led down from the poop to the main deck, and while he waited for the sounding of the bell to be relieved, he listened to the sounds from the concertina, as it wafted towards him the air of a tune he knew well.

Flap ! flap ! went the sails against the masts and yards, and woke him to life.

'Halloa,' he muttered, looking up a moment at the hanging sheets, and for the first time observing that haze behind, now nearly over to the mizzenmast-top.

'Reef the mainsail !' he yelled quickly.

'All hands on deck ! Cheerily, cheerily does it, lads,' and they are at the ropes as the words pass his lips.

It was all inaction a moment ago ; it is all action now,

as the men pull at ropes and dash up the rigging like monkeys during that short pause when the Storm-spirit, like a child who has been whipped, gathers in its breath. Then, with a shriek of fury, it is upon them. Crack! crack! and the two upper sails—maintop and mizzen-top—are away to the night, and with them five of the brave fellows so lately loafing on the forecandle-deck.

Then it was all over, ere one could realise that it had come; proving how frail are the works of man when brought into contest with the forces of Nature. Even as the luckless skipper, cramming his love-letter into his trousers pocket, made his appearance, the mizzen- and main-masts went by the board, and to cut them away was the only expedient left. All hands worked like madmen to clear that awful confusion of rattling chains, clashing bolts, rustling cords, amid the appalling thunderclaps of these immense canvases, as the demon winds lifted them up, and pitched them, yard-laden, against the doomed foremast.

To look round for one dazed moment was the honest skipper's first impulse; then, as his mind took in the consequences to him of that fell disaster, he groaned, even while he instinctively took the axe from the hands of one of the stunned sailors, and set to work, like the rest, to clear the wreckage and attempt to save that solitary mast. Cutting for very life they all were, while the vessel slewed from side to side, paying no attention to her wheel, but receiving that furious blast broadside and sternway alternately. While that thunderous din went on, that fearsome shrieking and ripping of the blast, 'Stand clear!' calls out Captain Saunders, with a steady voice and a bursting heart, as the foremast snaps like a rotten stick, carrying all along with it, and tugging like fury at the fore-rigging and stays, while the broken bowsprit went under that solid level of foam-covered water. 'Cut clear, or she'll sink!' and he flung himself right upon the rope-work, axe in hand, hewing right and left like the giant he was. Another instant, and the blast had raced beyond that water-logged hulk, bearing on its wings all the loose cordage and canvas that had lately swung so gallantly aloft.

Then the men could breathe, and lift their poor, stricken

skipper below ; for, as the cordage gave way, by him swept a dead-eye or something, which struck the brawny arm raised to give another blow, and he dropped like one shot. The vessel tossed up and down on the rapidly-rising waves, which, freed from their late captivity, swarmed over bulwarks and decks like jackals preying upon the slaughtered victim—that poor hulk, leaking at every seam, no longer making an effort against her doom ; while the stars came out again as the waves sank to sleep, and everything went on as before, excepting with ‘Te Kotiro.’

That wretched night passed over, the master lying like a log below, and the men at the pumps working without rest. Fortunately, the storm was soon past ; and, as morning broke over the already-soothed waste of waters, one and all came to the conclusion that the boats were their only chance. The good ship ‘Te Kotiro’ must be abandoned, as she was rapidly filling : so, after a brief consultation, the chief mate took the command ; and stowing the articles required for a sea-voyage into the launch—the only boat left to them out of that sweeping destruction—they carried up their still insensible skipper, placed him in the bottom of the launch, and then put off from the wreck, with the intention of reaching Dunedin, their nearest port.

Had William Saunders been sensible, I doubt if they could have got him aboard that launch ; with ‘Te Kotiro’ and his prospects he would have gone under : so that we must consider Dame Fortune not altogether merciless in thus tempering her curses with oblivion. He had not spoken since he fell on deck ; and they, poor fellows, could do nothing for him, except keep blankets on him and keep the water out.

All day they sailed in a straight course back ; but at night it began to blow fresher, first puffing catspaws, then growing with the hours that passed, until, as morning again came, they saw that they were in for a more regular gale, and made preparations accordingly.

And so for hours they tossed and beat about those rising waves, with just sufficient canvas set to keep them before the wind (driving them at an angle from their course), until, just about the time when a deep groan from the

blankets announced the waking up of their master, they saw in the distance a steamer bearing full down upon them—a joyful relief to all, as they were quite tired out with their cramped quarters.

Half an hour later and they were safe aboard the mail steamer, *en route* for the town they had hoped to see in their own vessel.

There happened to be a doctor amongst the passengers, who brought the captain round; his skull, being pretty solid, was not greatly the worse for the smash it had got in his fall against the bulwarks, and his arm, found to be broken, although long enough neglected, was set as best could be; so that by night he was able to sit up and take some food, after which William Saunders, with arm in sling, began to look affairs in the face—and for him a dreary, hard face it had become.

The first thing he did was to feel for the little watch and the love letter. Both were safe, and that soothed him somewhat, after which he turned his back to the front of his bunk and fell asleep.

Meanwhile the steamer breasted the storm, and kept on her way in the teeth of wind and waves, beating the air sometimes with her propeller, to be again submerged in the whitey-green masses that dashed over her black sides, and whirled about her funnel, going slowly but persistently on her way in that dogged manner steamships have of facing a gale.

And the wind shrieked, and dark masses of cloud flew over the space above in a wild hurry; torn patches of cloud-like shreds of canvas, skurrying in front of lighter grey clouds behind, with now and again a flash of white space breaking out, to be quickly closed inside the gloomy pall.

It was the second day of the storm that William Saunders got the last look of his ship and fortune. One of the men told him she sighted away to windward; she was still floating, but water-logged to the last degree. This was enough for William, so without heeding the doctor's orders to keep below and quiet, he hastily (with the aid of the man) dressed himself in his solitary shirt and trousers, and flinging an old pea-jacket loosely over his shoulders, he crawled

on deck, and there, leaning on the arm of the honest fellow beside him, who understood and shared his feelings, looked upon her, as she slouched limply upon that mighty billow, the salt tears running down his sun-tanned, pain-bleached cheeks.

There she lay nearly up to the gunwales, a dead weight upon that swirling, living mass of froth-marked waters, about a quarter mile away from them, going with the waves which the steamer was beating against at an angle; her bows were full facing, and the dismantled decks could be seen with their torn stumps of masts and a few tattered cords, like thin tresses, fluttering in the wind, and seemingly disturbing the repose of a vast cluster of sea-birds, who had taken possession and now sat upon the slippery, wave-washed deck, some quiet, some with wings flapping as if to keep their feet steady, others rising and screaming when the loose cordage fell at moments amongst them, to be again tossed to the blast.

Behind her stern the sky was all broken up into masses of dark-grey with intersections of yellowish-white and purple scudwork behind. One immense cloud impressed poor William powerfully, as having the appearance of prints where he had seen allegorical shadows of the Angel of Death, coming on with inky, outspread wings, flying locks, and distended cheeks, with other clouds, like beasts of prey, spreading over that inanimate victim great misshapen paws as they hurried on their mission of destruction.

Away to seaward rose and fell huge mountains of white-crested or darkly corrugated waves, going from bottle-green to purple grey and pitching up wreaths of mist-foam, as they clashed together, and blent with the purple-white of the intersections.

And over all swept a blast which bent everything before it, changing every moment, and seeming to eddy from between the cloud valleys, hurling slant-ways and in all directions that downpour of rain which struck against the cheeks like pellets of hail.

That 'Te Kotiro's' last moments had come all could see; the wave upon which she slouched seemed also to lie quieter around her in the midst of Nature's turmoil, the

cords had ceased to flutter, for an advancing breaker yet afar off caught the fury of the wind and made a bight and an interval of repose around that glistening deck where even the birds seemed to be settling down to sleep. Then, as William dashed the back of his hand across his eyes, the end came. A shriek from the white cloud of bird-life, as they sprang from their prize in a crescent-shaped flight up to the blackened sky; the sounding of exploding decks and air-bulged sides like the thunder of a battery, then, with a bound into the air, stern and side were exposed for one swift instant, as the breaker behind reached up, smashing whitely against her and buffeting her, like a giant smiting a dwarf.

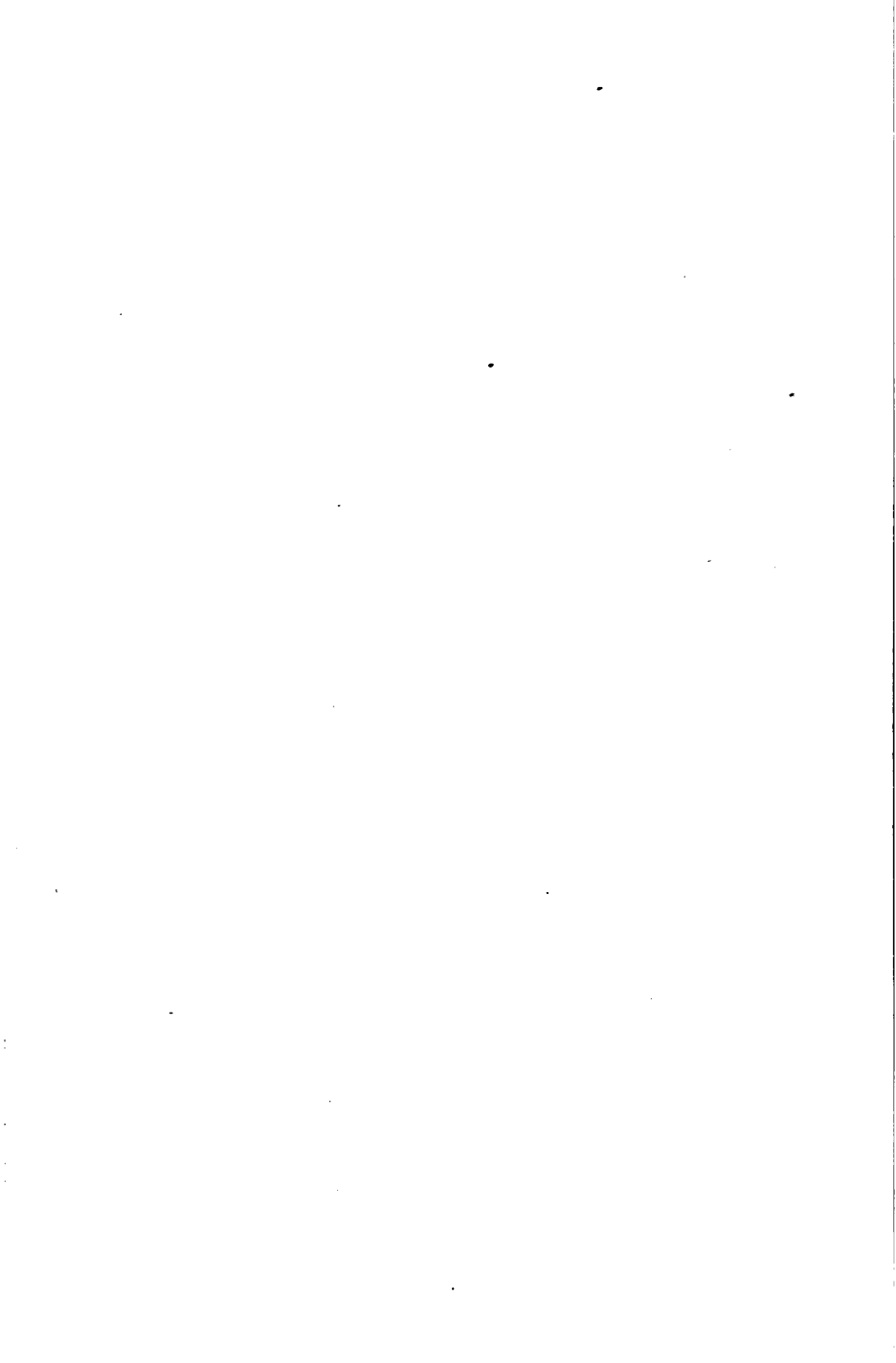
Short time to see it all, yet long enough to impress it upon that tortured brain, as the illumined country is impressed upon the brain of the man in the flash of that lightning stroke which shatters his all—a swift glimpse of the broken bowsprit cleaving the water like a wedge, and the rain-pour along the deck, arrested like congealed waterfalls as they are rushing to meet the waters in the hold, a rising up in a pyramidal shape of the wave as it yielded to the vortex, then down she slid like a thunderbolt, out of sight, carrying foam-buoys, curd-tracks and wreckage along with her, leaving above her a boiling whirlpool, and as lamenters those wild circles of screaming sea-birds.

Nine days after the survivors were landed at Circular Quay about eleven o'clock on a Sunday morning. The skipper, after seeing his fellows all safely housed, went off as fast as he could towards the church where he knew for a moral certainty he would find his sweetheart and her father, whose stern and disapproving eye he tried to stimulate his ebbing courage against as he went along. Yet it was much better for him to be the bearer, than let any other precede him with the bad news.

He was a much more picturesque than pleasing object that sunny morning, as he trudged along in his weather-worn pants, old greasy engine-man cap which he had perforce to borrow; the ragged shirt and buttonless pea-jacket flung mantle fashion over his shoulders because



THE SEA-CAPTAIN'S YARN



of that arm in sling. Anxiety had made him oblivious to these externals, and fortunately there were not many people as yet abroad, the virtuous section being in the churches, and the reprobate portion not yet out of bed; so that he was only stopped once on the way by a charitable passer-by who offered a coin, under the supposition that he was a beggar, which he admitted meekly that he was, and humbly accepted with thanks.

The last hymn had just been read out when he got to the church gates, so he took off his cap and stood in the shadow side of the building, and thus waited for the coming out of the congregation.

As he stood there, haggard and dilapidated, it would have been difficult for a friend to have recognised him as the jaunty sea-captain who so lately sailed away; an enemy might, or a lover, for they say that love and hate sharpen the eyes wonderfully to likenesses. Still he was oblivious to all this, and might have done very well, had he stood a while longer, cap in hand, as a recipient of public charity; for, as he gazed upon the faces of the congregation coming out, they dropped pennies quite naturally into the cap, without his being in the least degree aware of it. The Sydneyites of those days hated to see a beggar, and took what they thought to be the quickest way of removing these eyesores by setting them up in capital whenever they could.

By-and-by the old gentleman came out, followed by his pretty daughter, whose heart was far away 'o'er the deep blue seas.' He paused like the others to spare a copper, when his name on the lips of the beggar arrested his eye—that disapproving eye which William had so dreaded to meet; one flash, and he grasped the situation, and even as he turned back to scowl, Mary saw the man she was thinking of.

'William Saunders!' and she started back as if she had seen a ghost. Then his haggard face and broken arm caught her attention, and heedless of decorum, or dress, or disaster, away went Prayer-book, Bible, and parasol, and a tableau of contrast was created in an instant before the astonished eyes of the congregation, to the horror of her haughty sire, and amidst the derisive laughter of three of the heiresses who stood near by, the soft muslin blending with the sailor rags

as she flung her warm arms impetuously round him, sobbing as if her very heart would break.

William responded with one arm, and bore the pain as she lay against the other like a martyr. I doubt if he felt any pain except the pain at his heart and the choking sensation from the lump in his throat for a moment or two; then the harsh voice of the stern parent recalled him to his senses, and sent the pill down with a gulp.

'Mary, come back from that scoundrel!—how can you look with anything except contempt upon such a bungling knave? Come back, and regard the ragged beggar, and say then what you think of your scurvy sweetheart.'

'Dearer than ever, father, since he has come back to me,' sobbed poor Mary, still clinging to her lover, and regardless of appearances.

'Well, well! there is no curing that madness, except by calling in the minister, I suppose,' growled out the old gentleman helplessly. 'But tell us your news, lad. The ship——'

'Gone down, sir,' replied William, huskily.

'And is there nothing saved?' asked the father, savagely.

'Yes, sir, Miss Mary's watch and chain,' holding out the articles to the young lady as he spoke.

That was the last straw to the old gentleman's bad temper. I always believed that he was acting the stern father in the final scene, for as he saw the tiny watch some of the ludicrousness of the act appeared to touch his sense of humour, for he burst out laughing, and the heiresses laughed, and so did the congregation, and likewise the minister, who came out of the porch at that moment; and William showed his teeth and laughed also as he gave his whole arm to Mary, after stooping to pick up the articles she had scattered about, and then stood waiting for further orders.

'Let the marriage come off at once, and be done with it,' cried out the father at last. 'But no more sea voyages; you'll have plenty to do looking after the garden, young man; while you can attend to the house, Miss, since you cannot be a lady.' Then William said 'Amen' to all that the father suggested, and so they went home to dinner.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Parramatta—Orange Groves—Penrith—Emu Plains—The Zig-zag—
Educating Snakes—Over the Hills to Bathurst.

THE name of the Blue Mountains has always had a magic and mysterious sound in my mind. I used to see them in my fancy swimming in ether, with the vast distances and depths of the gullies causing that intense cobalt tint which gives to them their romantic title.

Once, while they were making the Zig-zag Railway, I went up with one of the engineers and stayed for two or three days at his camp. I can still remember a vision of dreamy grandeur, and how we caught a carpet snake, that python of Australia, the first day, and every hour fell across something or other in the shape of adventure. I also can remember how chilly the mornings were, with the ice on our water-pail, so that I discarded the easy costume of Victoria and took to my English clothing when I left Sydney.

It is a fineland we are passing through in the progress toward Parramatta. I had sailed long ago up the river lined with orange plantations, so did not want that route again; although I would have taken it had I not done so before, as there is no more picturesque river anywhere to be seen. I once described that sail up, with the orange blossom on the trees, to a poet friend. My friend had never seen an orange grove at the time, so he gave a glowing description of the blossoms festooning the walks and dripping *overhead* as young lovers walk *beneath*. It was almost as fine and realistic as the other poet who raved about the 'pendant cones of luscious gold, down-hanging from the weighted boughs of high pineapple trees.' The first poet has learnt better by this time; the other is, I believe, cultivating a plantation of pineapple trees in Bedlam.

The Parramatta River is not without its share of tragedy,

like many of the other beauteous spots about Sydney Harbour—beautiful Manley, &c.

Some years ago three boys hit upon one of the most diabolical ideas ever conceived by mortal as a means of making a livelihood. One of them hired a boat, the other started a registry for servants, and the third opened an old-clothes warehouse.

Their system was simplicity itself, and for a time fearfully successful. The registry-office partner advertised for servants and made engagements for those who applied, particularly 'New Chums,' who had no friends in the colonies. He pocketed their fees, and hired them for a gentleman on the Parramatta River. An appointment was made on the river bank, where the boatman partner was waiting to row the servants to their new home; agent and servants got into the boat and were rowed to a quiet part, and then despatched, stripped naked, and pitched into the water with a stone round their necks. It was the most wholesale and cold-blooded course of murder since the days of Burke and Hare, and equalled only by the late feats of Jack the Ripper, for they murdered their victims merely on the chance of the clothes and odd savings they might find in their boxes, which were conveyed back to partner No. 3 to sell in his shop.

They had all three been respectably brought up, lived with their friends, and were supposed to be engaged in offices in the city. The eldest was not much over twenty years of age, but had married a pretty young lady, and had two sweet children, to whom he was much attached. The others were under twenty.

These atrocious imitators of the Thugs of India succeeded in doing away with a great number of unwary new chums, for they fought shy of old colonials; only in an untimely moment they decoyed and killed the steward of a vessel who had run away from his post. The authorities were set on his track by the shipowners, and succeeded in unearthing the mystery and convicting the assassins, causing a wave of horror to pass over the continent as the fearful details were brought to light. Somehow I never cared to row on the Parramatta River after this discovery;

mental pictures of the victims being washed down to the bay and devoured by the sharks there always came up to me when I thought of doing so, with that awful Sweeney Tod the Barber old-clothes store, where the innocent-looking youthful proprietor waited for customers.

So I take the train from Sydney, and go on to Parramatta that way, stopping at such quaint little stations as Redmayne, Homebush, Rookwood, Auburn—names suggestive of olden days, when the Government namers were conservative and homesick, looking only on this land as a place of exile, and trying to make it as much a reminder as they could of the far-off home.

Parramatta, the second oldest town in Australia, is where the first garden was set, the first corn-field sown, the first sheep put out to grass, and the first Government house built, which is still standing in the public park.

Many of the fruit-trees, lemons and oranges, are fully fifty years old, and very productive. They are the largest of the kind in the world, many of them yielding over 400 dozens each per season. Oranges are the principal fruit cultivated at Parramatta, although all kinds of fruit thrive equally well here, such as the apple, pear, plum, peach, apricot, nectarine, loquat, &c.

The Governors' wives and sisters seem to have been of a homely and domestic turn in the olden times. It is told of one of them, Lady Mary Fitzroy, that a Sydney tradesman calling for orders in the early morning, and seeing her working about the place, slipped a 5*l.* note into her hand, thinking that she was the housekeeper, and wanting to win her good opinion; which gift she accepted as quietly as it had been given.

We get along past Parramatta and its fine orchards, watching the bright golden balls against the dark green glossy leaves; past Toongabbie, with its German vineyards and creek; the Seven Hills, Blacktown, where the Aborigines used to hold their big corroborees; Doonside; Rooty Hill, with its huge piles of logs for firewood, getting our first nearing view of the Blue Mountains, although, of course, we have seen them from the South Heads as the background of Sydney Town; and then, after a halt at St.

Mary's, we steam into Penrith, a large, low-lying, old-fashioned, and slow-going town, on the banks of the Nepean River, and, like unto Sodom, a veritable city of the plains.

We can now look over the tops of the houses across the Emu Plains to the Blue Mountains, rearing up rugged and wooded, with the first great viaduct and Little Zig-zag lying before us.

The Nepean River is one of the finest and most sublime rivers in Australia, with varied and picturesque banks, sometimes sloping gently to the water's edge, at other parts precipitous and overhung with foliage; the waters have also been proved to possess the same medicinal qualities as those of the spas of Baden-Baden, Munich, and Bath. At the spot where the Erskine Creek joins it this creek passes through some of the most stupendous gullies, arches, and caves which one could imagine.

After we have crossed the Emu Plains we begin our steep ascent of the mountains, getting, as we look from the windows of the carriage, a lovely panoramic view of the plains and country beyond, with the Nepean River flowing broadly through them. What a vast distance the eye takes in, with the foreground of flowers, rocks, shrubs, and trees below us. Then over Knapsack Gully by that triumph of Mr. John Whittion, the Viaduct of Seven Arches, the longest pillar of which is 126 feet, with a span of 50 feet on five of the arches.

We crawl up the mountains, to right and left, and left to right, now being pulled and now being pushed by the engine, at a gradient of 1 foot to 30, along steep cuttings, and over tree-tops; a most marvellous climb that is, up the first Zig-zag, although the full glory of the scenery has yet to come.

We are still going upwards or cutting through tunnels, with every few moments magnificent views flashing in front of us. At Glenbrook and Blaxland we have reached the height of 766 feet above sea-level—a rise of 679 feet during the last six miles. Blaxland is honeymoon country for newly-married couples, and Wascoe House Hymen's kissing-den. The old Bathurst highway runs along here,

once thronged with bullock-waggons, now sequestered and suitable to the hopeful pairs who peregrinate along it, gathering samples of fern, mosses, and wild flowers, as fond mementoes of happy days, before the stern duties of life wake them up. Avoid Blaxland, oh ye hardened cynics and veterans of matrimony, if you come for scenery, and do not wish to sneer in the heartless fashion of old married votaries, for 'Excelsior' is still the watchword.

Four miles upward and onward, and we have reached the 'Valley,' 1,048 feet above sea-level, and have a splendid prospect of giant gum trees with other lordly timber species, under which cluster ferns almost too numerous to classify. Here we can see Fitzgerald Creek, with numerous waterfalls rushing over the rocks and through the banks of botanical luxuriance. The waratah, Australia's pride, blooms here in perfection; also a complete exhibition of wild heaths, which, if in bloom, will not easily be forgotten.

Another mile takes us to Springwood, and up 232 feet more. About a mile from the station along the Hawksbury road, when you get to the top of the hill, you can look backwards for fifty miles right to Sydney Heads, over the Nepean River, over Windsor, Richmond, and Sydney, with the deep sea-line beyond Coogee and Bondi Bays—with always that delicious foreground of ferns, rocks, and mighty trees.

To describe the Blue Mountains in detail is utterly impossible in the space at present disposal; we must hurry on, for there is so much to admire before we reach Bathurst.

While at Springwood the visitor ought to see Sassafras, or Flying Foxes' Gully, where in ten minutes' walk you come upon the retreat of the flying foxes, and see hundreds of thousands of them hanging head downwards by day from the honeycombed holes of the rocks, which are all festooned with sassafras and supple-jacks—a tangle of tendrils, tree-branches, foliage, rocks, and bat-foxes, with waterfalls and the stream gliding along. At night these foxes seek the orchards and gardens, and great pests they are to the farmers. Here also abound the lyre bird, bronzo-

winged pigeon, pheasant, and various kinds of parrots, with the wallaby, wild cat, wombat, and other denizens of the forest, not forgetting what travellers sometimes do forget—the snakes incidental to that romantic region. The carpet-snake, which is the largest and most lovely which Australia can boast of, is to be found in full growth in the gullies of the Blue Mountains; also the deadly black snake, a very impartial prince of darkness, which I have met pretty nearly in all the climates and latitudes of this vast continent.

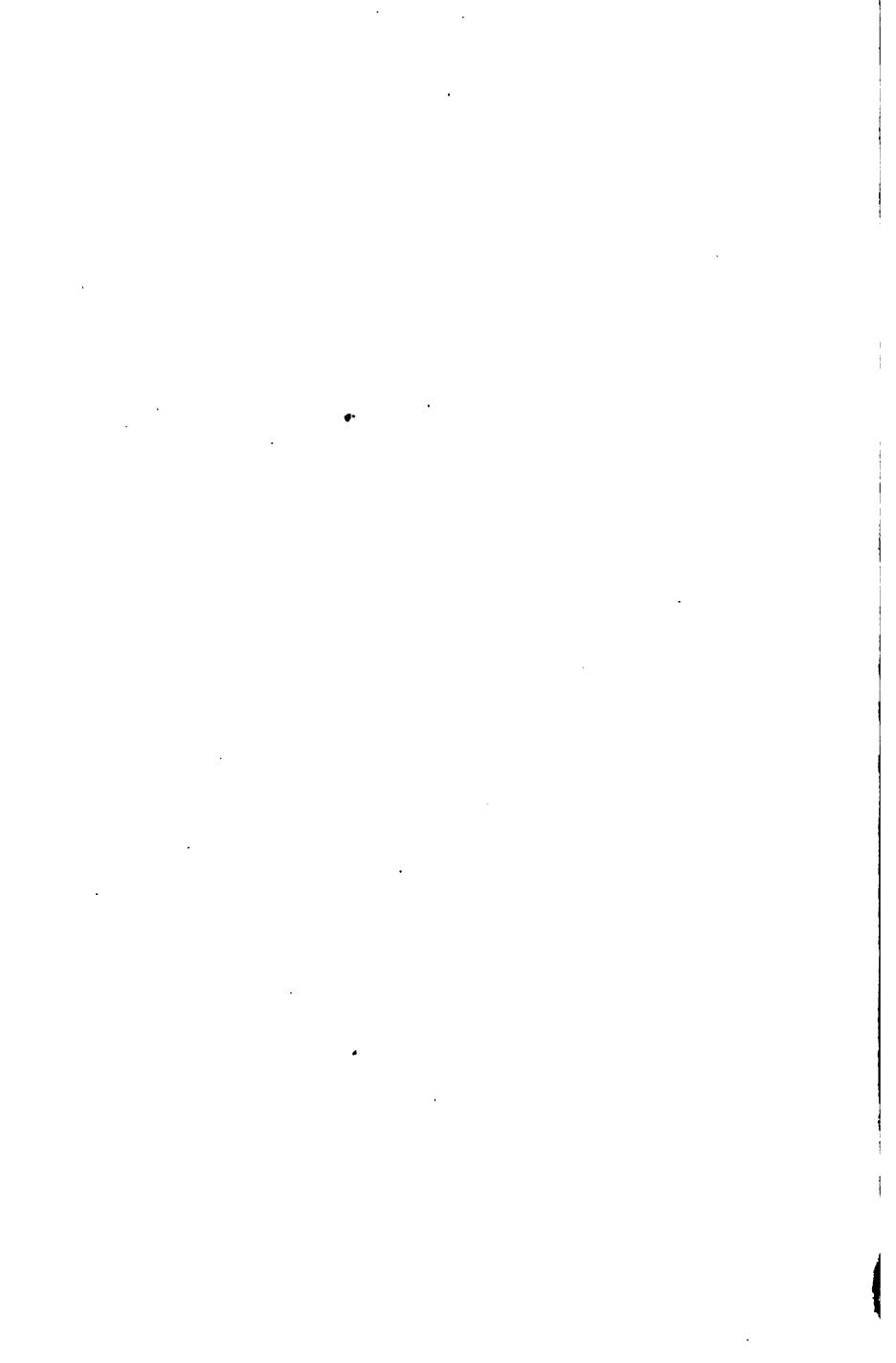
I don't know if it has been decided whether the large carpet-snake is poisonous or not. A friend who wished to go out to Australia was appalled after he had been to the Zoological Gardens to learn from the catalogue that they were all, without exception, deadly. I remember once a cabdriver who saw one lying asleep, and without considering the deadly danger (he was an Irishman of course), opened his box, jumped down, and lifting the sleeping beauty in his arms, pitched it inside before it could wake up, and drove his living freight to the museum, where he sold it. I can't tell how they got the prisoner out, or whether he tried to bite any one, but I do know that they managed to keep him alive for some time.

My system of dealing with the snake world is to let them get away if they can from me, and to try to get away as far from them as I can. I have killed one or two, but then it was for the same reason that they bite us—pure nervousness, which made me vicious.

Don't despise the poor snakes. They must be of use in the universal economy, else they would not have been created. On the whole, I think they are much more graceful in their cursed state than they were before the Fall of Man, when they had legs, and were compelled to walk instead of glide; and I have heard that they are very affectionate after they are properly *trained*. I respect them very greatly, and but for the thought of that 'chunk of flesh,' I might be inclined to try them as pets. The main difficulty lies in the training, I would say. After that it would all go on smoothly, provided one had 'chunks of flesh,' enough in one's corporation to spare for the edu-



THE BLUE MOUNTAINS



cation of those faithful and affectionate friends of man. Meanwhile, I am content to respect their good qualities and let them pass on.

We are still crying 'Excelsior' as we pass Faulconbridge, Numantia, and Woodford (late Buss's), the place which in former times was used as the halting-point of the gold-escort from the diggings to Sydney. We are now 2,191 feet above sea-level, and in the locality of eight picturesque waterfalls and a beautiful cavern—the retreat of a bushranger called King and his crafty gang. Then on to Hazelbrook and Blue Mountain Station, 2,399 feet above sea-level. We find here in the gullies the Livingston and Christabel Falls; in Dante's Glen also, rare views of cliff, valley, torrent, and woods.

Upwards another four miles and 437 feet, and we arrive at the Weatherboard or Wentworth Falls, where we witness one of the most stupendous leaps we have yet seen—a mountain torrent fall fully 1,000 feet. In time of flood what a fearsome sight this must be, with its tons rushing over that cliff, and landing with a thunderous din on the rocks below. To-day it looks like a number of silver threads weaving themselves amongst the rugged cliffs and trees. Dr. Lang, the prose poet of Australia, bursts into a pæan of passionate admiration. Darwin, the poetical naturalist, waxes fervent. He says: 'One stands on the brink of a vast precipice, and below one sees a grand bay or gulf . . . thickly covered with trees . . . showing headland beyond headland. . . . About five miles to the front another cliff extends which then appears to completely encircle the valley. . . . If we imagine a winding harbour with its deep waters, surrounded by bold, cliff-like shores, to be laid dry, and a forest to spring up upon its sandy bottom, we should then have the appearance and structure here exhibited.'

The scenery is ever increasing in grandeur as we rise. I have never in my life looked on anything like it, nor upon such a colour. It is like a landscape of lapis lazuli, with the ruins of giants' castles rearing up from the gorges below, all built from this rare stone. We have reached Katoomba, 3,349 feet above sea-level, and have still to

ascend. Again we look back on Sydney and the country between, with a host of eerie valleys and startling weird rocks all round, with waterfalls on every side: the Witch's Leap, a leap of 150 feet of sheer space; Maud's Wonder; the Orphan's Rock, strangely romantic and soul-thrilling; the Katoomba Falls; the Bluff, where the mountain takes the form of a mighty cathedral with three enormous spires, while a rock in the shape of a woman stands at the entrance, with the Ruined Castle rock near by, and the Picton and Nathui ranges fully fifty miles away.

We are in the land of enchantment and petrified shapes, of waterfalls majestic, fantastic, and beautiful; Birdie's Dell, Ladies' Rock, Nellie's Glen, the Lurline, and, mightiest of all, the Gap, where great precipices close in on this valley of forest like a huge wall, with a narrow gateway leading out to other valleys and vaster mountains far beyond.

We are close to Blackheath and Gavott's Leap, a waterfall which drops without a break 520 feet, and then rushes down to a depth of 2,027 feet; a valley three-quarters of a mile wide, with the most inaccessible cliffs, 800 feet high.

We can hardly see the trees below us, for they look like darker dots upon that universal shade of cobalt; and yet they are hundreds of feet in height. The water as it swings down looks like a wreath of snowy meshwork, the cliffs like built-up walls of masonry on a Titanic scale.

We now come to the highest point on our journey—Victoria, 3,422 feet above sea-level—where we find English trees growing in unity with Australian produce—the chestnut, oak, hawthorn, elm, poplar, pine, bunya-bunya, &c.

We can see from here most extensive views, embracing Mounts Tomato, Clarence, Wilson, and York, with the Fairy and Witches' Glens.

We are now going down the great Zig-zag, and upon Lithgow, the mining quarters, where coal, iron, copper, and other minerals are worked, and fine clay, terra cotta, &c., found.

Lithgow we do not see much of, as it is almost dark when we get there; enough, however, to be able to mark that it is devoted to work and commerce. They are not

idle in Lithgow; in fact, it is the first New South Wales town where work seems to be the main object of life. A glance, as we pause to rest, at the shafts and chimneys in the middle of this great valley, and then we are off once more, to our next resting-place, Bathurst, the third town of importance in the colony.

CHAPTER XXVII

BATHURST

Early Days in the Colonies—Governor Macquarie and the Great Blue Mountains Highway—Bathurst.

DAY was fading as we reached Bathurst, a lovely twilight, all old gold and sombre purple, transforming the modern stone buildings for the time into pagodas and Oriental domes.

Bathurst is the third most important town in the Colony of New South Wales, situated on the south side of the River Macquarie, and lying almost due west from Sydney, upon a gently-sloping rise, surrounded by ranges. It is unmistakably a fine and flourishing-looking town, named by Governor Macquarie after Lord Bathurst in the year 1815, and begun shortly after Lawson, Blaxland, and Wentworth had discovered the passes over the Blue Mountains in 1813, where a road was made along the ridge of the mountains by the chain-gangs of convicts, a gigantic undertaking most successfully carried out.

It was on January 24, 1788, that the first convict-fleet anchored at Botany Bay, after a voyage of eight months from England, making in all, as the start of the Colony, 36 officers, 168 soldiers, with 40 wives, 548 male convicts, and 230 female prisoners, the most abandoned of their sex. One chaplain had been fixed upon at the last moment to teach morality to this breathing concourse of vice and infamy. Botany Bay had to be discarded at once as an unfit place for a settlement, and it was just by an accident that

Captain Phillip, the commander, discovered Port Jackson. He got into it and proclaimed it an English colony only a few days before the two French ships of war, 'Boussoli' and 'Astrolabe,' under the command of La Perouse, followed them through the Heads.

Commander Phillip and his successors had anything but easy times before them during these early years; the proportion of men to women being six to one, the constant scenes of violence made up a record of crime too horrible to relate. To quote from the early records:

'Feelings of horror overcome us when we look back at the early days of New South Wales. Under an absolute government the settlers crowded together on a narrow space. The soil was a barren sand; every yard required for cultivation had to be gained by removing enormous trees of a hardness that tried the temper of the best axes wielded in the most skilful hands. On one side was an unknown shore and a shipless sea, on the other an apparently limitless country inhabited by savages, in which not a step could be taken without danger of being totally lost—a country which produced no wild fruit or root fit for the sustenance of man, and, with the exception of a wandering kangaroo or shy, swift emu, no game of any size fit for food. The mass of the community were slaves—slaves without the contentment of negroes or Russian serfs—for they had been born in a free country, and could not learn to be happy or submit, even if in the matter of food and lodgings they had been well provided, instead of being burnt with heat, perished with cold, and always half-starved. They were slaves labouring hard but scarcely producing anything, with the want of practical men over them, and the moral blight upon them; there was at first no discernment between degrees of crime, the vilest and the most venial being chained together. The overseers were prisoners selected by the favouritism of tyrannical and brutal officers: as Colonel Lachlan Macquarie remarked on his arrival in 1809, the Colony consisted entirely of those who had been transported and those who ought to have been.'

During those twenty-one years' interval between the

landing of Governor Phillip and the coming of Macquarie lie the record of imbecility on the part of the governors, and untrammelled vice, cruelty, brutishness, and nameless foulnesses in the governed, sinking the entire population into the lower depths. Twenty-one years of incapable government, unbridled license, and unrecordable infamies, with their accompanying evils—famine, disease, and death!

Governors Phillip, Hunter, King, and lastly the martinet and tyrant Bligh, were good enough and brave enough all of them, but utterly unfitted for their posts and the management of this wonderful infant.

Shiploads of convicts came out to die like rotten sheep, those who had managed to escape dying on board escaping nothing else in the form of degradation, the sycophants, male or female, being the only convicts who had a chance to get these hell-torments softened by fawning upon and pandering to the particular vices of their overseers and being traitors to their companions.

I heard a story of a girl who had been transported for theft, and which, I believe, was quite an ordinary way of dealing with domestics, when masters wished to be rid of them, in the good old times.

She was country-bred, and had the misfortune to be pretty as well as young; so much so, that her youthful master fell desperately and, what proved her ruin, honourably in love with her, and wanted to marry her—an idea so horrible in the eyes of his father, a magistrate, that he resolved to get rid of this threatened blot upon the family escutcheon.

The ridding operation was easy enough in those days when stealing was punished by hanging: a teaspoon, as in this case, dropped into the servant's box, and afterwards discovered there, did the trick. Then the humanity of the outraged master shone out conspicuously, when he nobly interceded for the life of the girl who had wronged him, and so got her sentence commuted to transportation to New South Wales.

Scene second takes place on board ship, where this innocent victim of love is forced to endure the company of the vilest of her sex, every morning rising to a day of misery

and outrage, every night falling asleep with horror in her soul.

In those convict ships it was the custom of the officers and military to pick out mistresses from the convicts for the voyage. They did this because it was considered that a mistress made the best spy, and so would be able to forewarn them of the numerous mutinies which are constantly being hatched below; at least, this was the official reason which they gave for the honourable custom.

So the country-bred girl, who had been plunged by her noble master straight from Sunday School into this floating hell, was chosen early by one of the tyrants, and forced to submit to her fate; the law of England had made her, a slave, fair sport for any beast who chose to abuse her.

In the Colony she changed hands as her overseers felt inclined; it was the custom of the land, and nothing was thought about it. Yet it greatly consoled me to hear that afterwards the master's son, whose ill-advised love had driven her from home and virtue, unable to bear the loss of her, had followed her out and made her an honest woman, according to the laws which had destroyed her. It was pleasant to think that the proud old county magnate had to open his paternal arms and receive, as his daughter, a convicted thief, and worse, instead of an honest servant-maid.

This is what, in the olden times, was termed 'colonial experience.' As Blair says in his 'Encyclopædia of Australasia,' 'With all these wrongs, added to starvation when the supplies ran short, could it be wondered if, under such a system of despotism, without discipline in the Colony, and in the face of such neglect at home, the descendants of these men (*and women*) had grown fiercely disloyal and anti-British? And yet it is not so. The Australians are a loyal, order-loving, law-abiding race, as they have recently proved more than once.'

When, however, Governor Macquarie came out, all this disorder was inquired into and put a stop to. Every encouragement was held out to convicts to behave honestly, work out their freedom, get married, and settle down in the land, and so the nucleus was laid of the mighty success which has followed these wise measures. He mustered the convicts

each Sunday and went with them to ~~ck~~ waiting for the valier a hospital and set apart proper bur~~man~~ side ~~sp~~ pointed the Courts of Law, divided the town ~~its~~ hand, and that I levied tolls to keep the roads in repair, which ~~t~~, and so nothing, in his restless activity, to elevate the ~~ern~~ at way if this community and encourage forest at that ~~th~~ in me cattle-breeding, settling large numbers of the str~~pe~~ was no farms of their own, and giving them their lib~~ee~~ we ~~re~~ that a he saw that it could safely be done.

His road-making is what he will be mo~~thing~~ art not remembered by, and his greatest achievement ~~int~~ has with is undoubtedly the highway which he formed from ~~whether~~ to Bathurst over the Blue Mountains, which were, before his arrival, considered to be utterly impassable.

The difficulties in the way were enormous; for fifty miles the highway lay through the most rugged country, where yawning chasms had to be bridged across, solid rocks cut away, ridges circumvented, banks levelled and built up. It has never been calculated how many lives were lost before the Blue Mountains could be walked over; but in less than fifteen months from the start Governor Macquarie was able to drive Mrs. Macquarie in his carriage right over the mountains to the fertile plains beyond, and plan out the town called Bathurst.

After this the Colony went ahead: the sheep were driven out to the plains to thrive, bullock-drays lined the highways constantly, and men who had come out as poor emigrants or despised criminals were soon able to return with assured fortunes.

I have heard from the old men of Bathurst how their fathers helped to make this road, and the hardships and dangers they passed through; of the great carpet snakes they encountered, the death adders and yellow snakes; it all sounded like the building of the Pyramids under the drivers' lash. It would take a book in itself to describe half the legends of blacks, bushrangers, and convicts trying to escape, thinking to get to China overland, and after weeks of horrible sufferings having to return like skeletons and give themselves up.

This great Blue-Mountain highway is still spoken of as

and outrage, every night the ancient Britons may have spoken soul.

In those convict roads which led over the mountains and military to the subject discussed over and over the voyage. The parlour of a little Bathurst inn kept by a mistress made habits of his early prison days. I used to feel warn them of the manner in which he constituted himself being hatched the manner in which he constituted himself which they gave of the drinking capabilities of his customers.

So the convicts were all exceptionally good, and his measure noble master prided himself on having the best-conducted ing hell, Bathurst; so he stood and counted up the to supply of drinks people had at his bar, and never allowed them to exceed three servings. If any of them wanted a fourth, he would say, in a fatherly but firm tone, 'I'll stand the next, and after that go elsewhere if you want any more.'

This was a fixed rule with the old hotel-keeper, and as the main body of his patrons were all 'old Lags' like himself, they understood what his 'No' meant, and never insisted. He was a well-informed man, with a face somewhat resembling old Barnum's in its benevolent expression and smoothness. I think, on the whole, that I enjoyed my evenings at this ex-convict's hotel, surrounded by these relics of early colonial life, more than I have done anywhere else, besides coming away with the fixed impression that there may be worse angels in heaven than the penitent thief.

Very different was my experience in one of the other hotels here, where I saw one of the most dastardly fights that I ever looked upon; fortunately neither of the combatants were colonials.

It was pay-night amongst the railway men, and they had gathered here to drink some of their wages. One of them, a tall ruddy-faced young Scotchman, who I discovered afterwards was a new chum, and therefore expected to fight his way into respect, had come in with a friend to have a drink, when a gang of his fellow-workmen entered, and straightway started to pitch offensive remarks at him. There had been a running-match that afternoon, in which he had been victor, which added to their malice and fury.

As I stood close by listening and waiting for the valier I noticed a very small ugly-looking man sidle ~~and~~ pointed up to him with an empty quart pot in his hand, and that I him in a strong Lancashire brogue, to which ~~he~~ and so fellow replied in a laughing but broad Western ~~at~~ way if could hear and see enough to understand that ~~with~~ in me sneak wished to fasten a quarrel upon the str~~ee~~ was no of being backed up by the others, who were w~~ere~~ ~~ne~~ that a was upon the result. but from

Then, all at once, as the Scotchman laughing; art not his face from his tormentors, I saw the quart pot ~~has~~ with his head, and him staggering backwards, with a gre~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ over his left eye, for a moment dazed and blinded.

I expected to see the other men cry 'shame,' and kick the little coward into the road, instead of which I was astonished to hear them shout out:

'Good, Bill; at him, now's your time; punish the——'

Like a tiger the little man sprang on to the still-dazed stranger, and bringing him to the floor, fastened his teeth in his cheek, and began to gnaw away like a savage dog.

I had often heard of these miners' and Black Country modes of fighting, where ears were eaten and eyes gouged out, but this was my first experience, and it filled me with rage and horror. Hastily looking round, and seeing no one attempt to separate this mongrel English-speaking cannibal from his victim, I ran forward, and, watching my chance, sat down with a sudden flop upon his beastly little stomach, knocking the wind out of him in an instant, and giving my countryman a chance for his life.

We had a stormy five minutes after this—pots flying about the bar, and things getting smashed up. However, the landlord came to my rescue, and helped me to clear the premises, and get the young Scotsman's face sponged, after which I offered to go with him and see the battle out in the moonlit streets.

'There is no use,' he said, despondently. 'They have all got a down on me, and will swear anything against me. They mean to drive me out.'

And, true enough, in a few moments some of the police broke in, and arrested the young man for breaking the

and our soul, and assaulting the little man. Fortunately for him

In those days, a letter of introduction to one of the magistrates, so able to give a fair account of the incident and of justice; otherwise he would have been fined, the voyage, and deprived of all prospect of work.

a mistress range how one thing will bring up another. As I warn them, such of that unworthy stomach, I recalled the being hatch, fight which I had seen between the aboriginals which they, links of the George River, and contrasted the two

So the noble man, Bathurst is a healthy and picturesque town, whichever ing hell, you look at it. I took a sketch of it from near the to sub-English College, looking over it, with some goats grazing beside me, with the early morning mist upon it, and felt as if I was drawing some old English town with old-fashioned square-built towers and irregular houses. From Havanah Street I also sketched it; from the Vale Road, with the open fences lining the roads, and from the suburbs, getting romantic peeps at Kelso and Perth.

Bathurst is mainly an agricultural place, although there are numerous goldfields lying about, also copper and silver mines; and I must not forget to mention the handsome buildings which comprise the court-house, gaol, school of arts, town hall, and post office.

The last day I spent at Bathurst my eyes were dazzled by a very radiant apparition. It was an Indian prince, gorgeously arrayed, who was sauntering in leisurely state along the streets, and seemingly absorbing most of the sunlight near him.

When I got close to him, he stopped and smiled upon me with a gentle Oriental sadness, and salaamed as to an acquaintance, and then I recognised him. It was the body-servant of my old shipmate, the Chevalier Stuart Cumberland, who was here on a thought-reading expedition. As I had never seen my friend perform, I gave the Hindoo a message for his master that I would be at his *séance* that night, and in the afternoon received a formal invitation to come upon the platform.

However, that evening I was engaged until too late with Mr. Bean, of the English College, on business, and so had

to forego the pleasure. Before we parted the Chevalier joined us, resplendent in evening dress. He was disappointed that I had not turned up, as he had announced that I would illustrate his subjects on the blackboard, and so was I, for I would gladly have obliged him that way if he had prepared me; but Stuart had great faith in me as an impromptu artist, and so thought there was no necessity of giving me any notice. He told me that a substitute had volunteered from the audience, but from the artistic specimens displayed he considered art not yet a strong point in the education of Bathurst, as with all his skill at reading thoughts he could not tell whether the marks represented the animals which went into the Ark, or bits of the Ark itself after they were done with it.

He told me that he had been on my tracks all through Victoria, trying to catch me up, but until then had been just one day too late.

I was much amused at his experience amongst the Chinese murderers at Echuca. A couple of Chinamen had murdered and robbed a digger there, and although the evidence was pretty complete, still it was all circumstantial, and none of the loot had been discovered; therefore the Government had sent the Chevalier up to try to read their thoughts, and so get at the particulars of the crime that way.

My friend informed me that he had got them out of their cells, and tried all his blandishments and arts to penetrate their Celestial reserve without success. All he could read of their thoughts, as they stood smiling in front of an old wall, went no farther than the time-stains upon it; therefore he came to the conclusion that they were a couple of blank idiots, without the thin side of a thought between them.

Possibly he was right. Probably the murder had been such a trivial affair in their estimation that they had forgotten all about it. It is not an easy matter to penetrate to the inner workings of the cranium of an Asiatic.

CHAPTER XXVIII

TOWARD BOURKE

From Bathurst to Bourke, and Towns between—Orange—To the Fish River Caves from Bathurst, and back by Katoomba—'Auld Lang Syne.'

FROM Bathurst to Bourke is a long and somewhat uninteresting ride of about 359 miles of monotonous plain, with here and there an abrupt sugar-loaf mountain starting up like a knot within a basin of porridge—such as New Year Range, Mount Hopeless, &c. We are passing through the great pastoral district of Wellington, and through the counties of Cowper, Canbelego, Oxley, Narromine, Gordon, and Wellington.

From Bourke the Darling River runs down and joins the Murray at Wentworth—a rising town and wharfage, where, when the season permits, steamers can trade right up to Bourke and down to Adelaide.

People staying at Bourke can look over the plains and watch the train coming along the line for sixty or seventy miles, so that there is no danger of their missing it. They can finish their sleep, get dressed, and have breakfast leisurely after it has been sighted.

Dubbo is the next place of importance on the line from Bourke—built on the Macquarie River, across which a fine bridge, 300 feet long, has been thrown. The population is about 3,200, and the ground is much taken up for farming purposes. Although mainly pastoral, it is well-laid out, has some good stone and brick buildings, and a public library of 1,500 volumes.

Orange has a population of 9,461, and is famed for its bracing climate. It stands 2,843 feet above the sea level, and possesses a library of 3,500 volumes. When 'A Colonial Tramp' is published I trust it will possess 3,502, for it is a weakness of mine to gauge the worth of a people by the number of volumes they possess in their public libraries. In many of our country places in England they have started

workmen's clubs. The vicar of the place generally gets it up, furnishes it with a billiard-table, and one or two harmless dailies and weeklies. This is generally considered enough for the sluggish brain of the dormant Saxon. And from what I have seen of these men, I think their spiritual guides are about right; but when men and women possess brains enough to be able to make up their minds to cross the ocean in search of happiness and freedom, then they want a little more than these bishop-consecrated 'guides, philosophers and friends,' are able or willing to give them. No one ever expects to find in such a country as Australia such slow worms as one runs against constantly in the green lanes and clay fields of used-up England.

Orange is what we might well call an intellectual farmers' town. In their School of Arts they have the finest hall to be found throughout the Colony. They have wide streets, and over 26,000 acres under cultivation. I think, if it could be possible, I'd like an appointment as art director or editor of the future *Orange Art Magazine* when it comes out, for I am fond of bracing air and growing crops, and I like the name of this prosperous town.

And yet I don't know; when I look over the map of Australia and its present divisions, my ambition aims at being a citizen of some of the larger portions—Queensland, South Australia, or Western Australia. What boundless possibilities there lie for future greatness and advancement in these mighty slices. Of course they will all be subdivided into different colonies in the future, for each of them is too great for one Parliament to be able to manage. There will be a North-Western Australia, Western and South-Western Colony, with three capitals; also South, Central, and Northern Australia, and North and South Queensland. On the whole, I'd rather be one of the literary and artistic powers of one of these unnamed colonies than settle down lazily to such an easy post as Orange would be. One thing, however, which is perfectly clear to me is, that the Malthusian question need not be studied yet for the next thousand years by Englishmen, with such a noble heritage lying idly waiting upon the making up of their sluggish minds.

It would not be proper to leave this district, having returned to Bathurst, without visiting the Jenolan, or Fish River Caves, one of the natural marvels of this marvellous land—Sydney Harbour and the Jenolan Caves are what visitors are mostly expected to praise; and I would add, the Blue Mountains. No one with an eye for beauty, a sense of grandeur, or hankering after the supernatural, can possibly hold his tongue who has seen either of these wonderful places. Sometimes I have been disappointed. I think I was a little at Rockhampton, when I had spent a day at the Olsen Caves there; not quite, for I had pleasant company that day, which made up for the anticipation not realised; but nothing could possibly be more fantastic, more eerie, more beautiful or startling than the Fish River Caves.

I went alone from Bathurst to Oberon—the final halting-place, along undulating plains watered by the Macquarie River, down through broken table-lands, past quagmires and fairy rings, through an enchanted region, which may well be called Oberon's Land—with the fairy township at the foot, where wanderers might rest for awhile before penetrating Queen Titania's special domain.

Oberon lies about thirty-two miles from Bathurst, on the Fish River Creek. It is principally a farming district, and has two hotels—the Royal and the Welcome Inn—and 500 of a population; a sweet little village, where one may well fill out a few days going about.

Jerry Wilson is the guide, who takes us under his wing at Oberon, and starts with us next morning for the famous Caves, which lie about eighteen miles distant.

We pass one or two farms on the wayside, which is lined with gum trees. As we get near to the Caves the country begins to grow very rugged, with enormous trees starting up over the ridge, which is 4,200 feet high. We go down a very steep road, while 500 feet below stretches a long, narrow gorge, with abrupt mountains on either side, partly covered with huge trees, with great boulders up-starting on all sides—a Dante-esque picture, with a silvery line of water rushing along at the bottom. It is a wonderful valley this for grandeur, for the sides are at places

almost perpendicular, making one giddy to look at them, while there appears no exit from where you stand and gaze at the wall-like mountain's side beyond. To get to the Caves you must take a zig-zag pathway cut along the face of this precipice, until you come to Jerry's house and the entrance to the first cavern.

Travellers who have seen both places compare these caves to the Grotto of Adelsberg, near Trieste. They are formed both of prismatic stalactites and stalagmites, in all sorts of rare shapes—carvings, pendants in crystal and alabaster, the limestone drippings of long ages. Where the daylight penetrates, it resembles the filtering in of subdued light through marble, richly-carved domes of cathedrals; when they are lighted up by the torches and lime-lights the effect of surpassing splendour of colour is positively blinding.

The first cave we enter by the 'Grand Arch' is called the 'Imperial Cave,' which is from seventy to ninety feet high—very rough and rugged, with boulders on all sides shelving away. Here we light our candles, and, following Jerry, our guide, come to the 'Woolshed,' so called because the designs of the alabaster-like stalactites look like the wool upon a heavy-coated sheep's back. How gently Titania lures us on, reserving her greatest beauties and most delicate carvings. She unfolds her scenes like a pantomimic transformation combination, proving that Nature can be artful as well as our modern masters of scenic effect.

The 'Architect's Studio' comes next, where long stalactites seem to hang ready-made and waiting on orders for churches; next the 'Margaretta Cave'—large, roomy, and covered with delicate tracery. 'Helena's Cave' enshrines the upright figure of a chaste Madonna, clad in virgin white. The 'Lucinda, or Diamond Cavern,' greets us next with its glittering floor of scintillating diamonds, and walls draped over with filigree work. In 'Katie's Bower' we find the church organ waiting on the Titan fingers to sound those multitudinous pipes. In the 'Bone Cave' we find all sorts of petrified wallaby bones. The 'Crystal Rock,' which has the appearance of an everlasting fountain

playing over a crystal grotto; the 'Imperial and Shawl Cavern,' the 'Lady's Finger and Lolly' caves lure us onward; then the 'Show Room,' 'Lot's Wife,' the 'Crystal City,' the 'Mystery,' 'Nelly's Grotto,' 'Silence Cave,' 'Fairy's Retreat,' where we wait expectantly on the elves, who have for the present run away, leaving the bats behind to tell them when we have gone; the 'Diamond Wall,' 'Crystal Palace,' 'Garden Palace,' 'Jewel Casket,' 'Gem of the West,' the 'Queen's Jewels,' and 'The Underground River.'

What vistas of romance open up to us as we penetrate these Caves through this mountain, listening to the descriptions, and looking round us as we go climbing and crawling along, squeezing through narrow doorways, or between pillars made by the stalactites above meeting and joining with the stalagmites below. It is all a dazzle, all a bewilderment and aching of the back and brain. At last we are out of it, as tired out by the glitter and colour as if we had been looking at a Drury-Lane pantomime drawn out to the length of a Chinese comedy.

I read an account of the organic causes written by the Government geologist, Mr. Wilkinson, with great relief, as it brings me down from the idea that it is all a phantasmagoria. It is extremely interesting to know how long it took Mother Nature to work out this sort of effect; that this marble-work of hers was once a mass of living corals, stone, lilies, and molluscs. I don't at all care about what it reveals in the Siluro-Devonian epochs; or how the decaying vegetation of some ancient forest is invisibly distilling carbonic acid, which the rain-storms clear away and carry into a thousand acid streams to distant oceans; nor how the land sinks and is pitched up again, and reproduced in these exquisite shapes. Sufficient for the day is the deliciousness thereof.

As I turn away from the Caves, I am glad that I have been able to visit them, for they are something to recall if ever I wish to realise Fairyland either with pen or pencil.

I now take the bridle-track towards Katoomba, as I am told this is the most romantic and wildly imposing, if more

tedious, of the ways; and I find it to be so—something that I would not have missed for double the toil and trouble involved.

Up the ridge of the spur of mountain we walk for 2,550 feet, with the great high wall of the main range far above us, with gloomy arches and natural bridges to go under and cross over, with crags like huge castles lowering up from the valley, and great trees spreading their covered or bare branches all round. Along the Black Range, zig-zagging towards the Little River, with splendid views on all sides, the deepness of the great Jenolin Valley, Cox's Range, Mellow Gap, with The Brothers, two-peaked hill, behind it, and to the left Katoomba, rearing high against the clouds. Doré never walked up this way, but he imagined it very nearly in some of his 'Inferno' and 'Quixote' illustrations; and as he has pictured it so we may leave it.

We sometimes walk along the edge of an abrupt precipice and look down upon a deep blue-green ocean of tree-tops, with the intense purple-blue hills beyond on the Black Range. We come by the old cart-track which led to Bendo and Hartley, then along the top of the ranges, 3,200 feet above the sea, for a good four miles, then down to the valley of the Little River, which we cross and follow along amongst its pebbles and clear water; up again to the Mina Mina Range, and, after we cross it, down again to the Gibraltar Creek, where, after we cross it three times as we follow its course for half a mile, we come to the homestead of Peter Reilly, who makes us welcome and enlivens us with a flow of racy stories about stockmen, bushrangers, convicts, black fellow, and snakes.

Again we cross the Gibraltar Creek at its junction with the Cox River, seeing on our way a great wall of lovely rose-tinted granite dividing the valley. At the Cox and Gibraltar Creeks we notice the huge boulders of grey granite, which lie about or start up in fantastic shapes, while the water runs along in deep pools, or forms countless cascades. The Toad and Pinnacle rocks are passed; then gradually we rise again, until we come to the Cox River; then on until we come to the Migalong Creek, and after

this almost a level track through the bush, boulders, and valleys, until we reach the Glen of Katoomba, up which we climb under overhanging cliffs, past the Boar's Head Rock and the Castle Cliffs, which look for all the world like a granite castle—buttresses, turrets, battlements, square and round towers, all complete even to the joints and lines of the masonry. Soon we pass the Falls and the Explorer's Tree, which marks the farthest distance Blaxland, Lawson, and Wentworth got to in their Blue Mountains expedition of May, 1813; and then, striking the old Bathurst road, we have arrived at Katoomba station.

It was at the Katoomba Hotel, kept by a Scotsman, Mr. Brown, that I met a Mr. Baird, a selector, and owner of a very fine house. Three Scotsmen met together in a foreign land with the grand result—a drink of mountain dew, and a song—the song of songs to Scotsman—'Auld Lang Syne.' How we made the rafters dirl as we sang it with full voices, clasped hands, and waving heads! Outside the mists were rolling up the valley as densely as they could have done in bonnie Scotland, while overhead a real Scotch mist was falling and drenching everything. It was all complete as a picture and a poem, and the visitors came out to listen and laugh at our enthusiasm, and ended by joining in the chorus—

Then here's a han', my trusty freen',
An' gie 's a han' o' thine,
An' we'll tak' a richt gude willie wacht,
For the days o' old lang syne.

It was my last warm shake of the hand in New South Wales, and whenever I hear the song since I always think of the Blue Mountains and the hospitable landlord of Katoomba.

CHAPTER XXIX

AT SEA

*En Route to Brisbane—The Daring Captain—Smoke-room Yarns—
‘How we were Saved,’ and Dick’s ‘Tale of a Shark.’*

A DAY or two before I left for Brisbane the whole of the Colonies were ringing with the news of a most awful wreck which had occurred between Melbourne and Sydney. One of the coasting steamers had gone ashore and foundered, losing most of the passengers, so that people were chary about putting to sea.

Yet I knew that the old adage was a true one: One is never so safe at sea as just after a wreck. The coasting skippers like to beat the record in their runnings, and so have a tendency to cut sharply round corners, and this is where the danger lies. Familiarity has made them grow contemptuous of the rocks in the way, and so they sometimes strike and go down, and there is no coast so relentless to wrecked sailors as the Australian coast is, except it be the cliff-coast of New Zealand.

Two rival steamers were leaving for Brisbane when I got to the Wharf. The captain of one belonged to the slow-and-sure school, and the other was managed by the most dare-devil captain of all those who run inside Sydney Heads; he always got up to Brisbane a few hours before his rival, and hitherto had always carried his passengers safely. So I decided upon the swiftest and, as it proved, the most comfortable ship.

After dinner, while I was walking along the deck smoking, this daring captain joined me in a cigar. During the conversation I remarked, casually:

‘I heard that you were the most reckless skipper round Australia. That is why I took my passage aboard.’

The captain took out his cigar and looked me over savagely. ‘What the —— do you mean, sir?’

‘Well, you see I want to get to Brisbane—or heaven—as soon as possible,’ I replied quietly.

'Look here,' said he, grasping my arm and pointing to a yellow light away on the left, 'do you see that light in there?'

'Yes, captain.'

'That's the other ship which left along with us—the slow one—two miles nearer the coast than we are. What do you say to that for safety, eh?'

'That I have wronged you, captain, and apologise.'

We shook hands over it. He did not say, and I did not let him know I was aware, that at the time we were boldly cutting in a straight line from promontory to promontory, and that the steady and sure captain was keeping his usual safe distance all the way round, hugging the shore for fear of the storm which was brewing outside. There was no use going into such details.

'And I'll tell you what, we'll be in Brisbane eight hours before him in spite of his reckless folly.'

I didn't doubt it in the least, so shortly afterwards we adjourned to the smoke-room, where several of the passengers had gathered to play cards and tell yarns.

One old man, who was the owner of a pearl-fishing station in the Torres, got on to telling of an adventure which he had with the natives of New Guinea, and as I intended going there I pricked up my ears to listen.

They called him the Captain, as he owned several fishing sloops in those parts. He was half-way through with his yarn, but, as I could gather, he had been wrecked near Cloudy Bay on a coral reef, with only time for himself and men to get ashore by swimming. As we entered he was saying:

'Yes, mates, I have been into many a hair-raising scrape in my life before and since, but this appeared to be the very worst; here we stood, five men and a boy, on the sands of New Guinea, with our cutter forty fathoms under water, her bottom ground to matchwood on the cruel reefs, and ourselves without a weapon of defence, in the midst of the most savage tribes of man-eaters which the habitable globe could produce, weaponless, foodless, and with only what we had upon us when the cutter went down, waiting for the day to dawn to be discovered and trussed up like a row of winged ducks.

‘It had all happened in a moment: rough water outside, we thinking to get past the reef into a haven of rest, a sudden shock and crunching like rats’ teeth, time only to jump overboard and swim ashore as best we could, while our little “Sarah” went down like a thunderbolt, and left us helpless.

‘We were at the mouth of Cloudy Bay, which, if any of you knows the geography of those parts, meant slow roasting alive as soon as the natives woke up in the morning and got a peep at us.

‘A splendid country as far as scenery went, but, Lord bless you! what was scenery to us, watching through the long night, wet, miserable, and without even a quid of tobacco to stay the pangs of hunger, knowing as we all did what was before us as soon as daylight came to show up those beautiful mountains, valleys and forests behind us, as we stood shivering on the sands.

‘“God help us,” I muttered, as I saw the daylight at last steal ghost-like over the blue-grey hilltops, and then turned seaward in the vain hope of a distant sail—nothing, only the snow-white surf breaking over the murderous coral reef, and the tumbling black line of water beyond.

‘Yet, within the reef I did see something—a case of some sort slowly drifting with the inflowing tide to shore. In a moment every man was active, wading and swimming out to secure the treasure. We had it ashore in no time, and prised it open with our fingers and nails, thinking it might be meat, or tobacco.

‘I appreciate the comforts of a nice bath and good soap to wash with as well as any man, but to find, instead of tucker or tobacco, a case of *Pears’ Soap*, on a cannibal land, as we then were, was a disappointment which language fails to express, although we all at the moment used it pretty strong.

‘“Close round the case, boys; they are coming,” I shouted, as I saw the sun lift itself over the peaks, and in front of us about fifty mop-headed savages armed with bows, arrows, and spears, rushing round the promontory pell-mell upon us.

'On they came at a run until about fifteen yards distant; then, seeing us all standing quietly waiting upon them, they paused, and after a minute or two of palaver amongst themselves sent out their chief to talk to us.

'Seeing this I grabbed up an armful of the soap tablets and advanced from my men to meet him. He was a savage-looking fellow, stark naked excepting for some shark's teeth round his neck, but as he noticed the load I carried I saw his eyes lighten up at the amber-like cakes which the sun was now shining upon; thus I felt a little hopeful. This was a novelty in the land, and novelties, when they do take the popular fancy, mean success both in savage and civilised communities.

'Going straight up to this noble man-eater I held out a cake for his acceptance. He took it, smelt it, and afterwards tasted it, but did not seem to take to it in that fashion, for he turned upon me with a heavy scowl.

'Then I hastened, by pantomimic action, to show how it was used amongst us. Ah, that took, for if the Papuan is fond of anything, it is of washing and bathing himself. Seeing a little fresh-water stream running near by, I led the chieftain by the arm over to it, first washing my own hands to show him the way, and then giving him the tablet to use himself.

'What a scrubbing took place for the next ten minutes amongst these copper-skins, and how they glistened in the sun afterwards! Bows, arrows, and spears were pitched headlong down, while they lathered one another, and tossed fresh water over their bodies.

'We were saved, and made medicine-men of the tribe on the spot, while the Dubo house was decorated with the pictorial advertisements of this great firm, and ourselves treated to the very best in the village. Two weeks afterwards, when we were rescued by Her Majesty's cruising war-sloop, we left behind us at least one tribe in New Guinea who had taken with the first leap the last step of civilisation. They were happy in the possession of Pears' Soap, and disconsolate that the stock was getting low, for they used nearly the same words, when they bade us farewell and implored us to return with more, that the ac-

complished Jersey Lily writes: "It had become a necessity which they could not live without."

There was a slight pause after the Torres Straits skipper had finished—not one of incredulity, as no one, to look upon that open, sun-tanned, grey-whiskered, and scanty-tressed countenance, could have dared to doubt the accuracy of his legend. It was a respectful pause, such as we are used to in church after the parson has uttered the final 'Amen.'

Then someone broke the ice by making a remark upon the voracity of sharks, and wondering how they ever got ashore in such a shark-infested sea. A few related hair-breadth escapes which they had had from the monsters, when finally one young fellow called Dick said: 'There's a mighty difference between a deep-sea shark and a ground-shark. Did you ever try to catch a regular blue-nose?'

We all remarked that we hadn't, and then he began his narrative.

Story of a Shark.

'We had reached the Line after a fair share of roughing it at Cape Horn—running short of water through our condensing machine breaking down, an accident which might have been exceedingly disagreeable but for the amusement we contrived to *extract* from it, our skipper being fond of experimenting and obstinate in his convictions. However, that threads me on to another hank, which will serve again.

'We had got into the doldrums, and filled our casks with the everlasting rains, and now lay rocking and sweltering on an ultramarine plain, under an ultramarine sky, with the sun straight overhead, and only the shadow of our soles on the heated deck underneath.

'There was nothing to be done except wash our shirts, pour water over the crackling boards, and lie half-dressed under awnings on the poop, but even there to sit long was to stick fast to the melting pitch that oozed upwards from every gaping seam.

'The skipper had gone down to sleep it out, the little

French officer, my fellow-passenger, had retired to his cigarette and diluted claret, when one of the men proposed a swim, to which all hands eagerly agreed, there being no one to forbid it.

'Off went our shirts and ducks, and in another moment we were all floundering in the deepest of known waters.

'The boldest amongst us went aloft to one of the yards, and took the plunge from there. As I watched them cleave the breast of that intense ocean, it seemed as if they had disappeared into liquid cobalt, and the length of time which elapsed before they appeared to view again showed the fearsome depth they had dived into.

'I am not a bold swimmer, so that I made use of the rope which hung over the ship's side, and let myself down very gently. What a sensation it was to turn my back to the vessel, and, letting go the rope, consign myself to immensity! Blue above, blue beneath, blue on every side. It felt as if with that rope I had let go my hold of life, and was floating on a blue immensity.

'I struck out, but could not drive away the awesome fear. Blue sparkles flew from my limbs; blue got into my very brain; until just as I felt the desire to throw up my arms in horror and sink in it, the skipper's angry voice came booming from behind, ordering us all on deck at once. A scramble at the rope's end, and we stood before him like discovered schoolboys, dripping, and making shame-faced lunges for our clothes.

"Did any one ever hear the like of this—floundering in an ocean swarming with sharks! See yonder! Where would some of you have been but for my timely appearance?"

'He pointed over the side to where a pair of black spots appeared to be floating, and immediately forgot to rage as the sportsman's instinct leapt into action.

"Quick, steward! A lump of pork, and the longest line we have aboard."

'We got the big whale-hook baited with about ten pounds of raw pork, and, taking our positions on the poop, let it over, and prepared to watch.

'Then a very pretty little play began: the black fins never moved from where they lay, but from the locality darted forward a small green-and-white barred fish like a mackerel, right up to the pork, seeming to smell it all over, and with critical scrutiny examine it.

"All right," concluded the pilot, as he darted back to inform his chief. No good. For a female she was wonderfully cautious, but then she was a matron, as we saw afterwards, so had a right to be careful.

'Again the pilot swam round the bait, and reckoned it up on all sides as perfectly safe; indeed, brought the two baby sharks, of whom he evidently was nurse, to have a look as well, and confirm his opinion.

'Back trotted the two young things with their active attendant, and, adding their juvenile voices to that of the more experienced critic and guide, evidently overruled even maternal caution, for the fins began to sail closer.

'On they glided, with the pilot leading the way, and the youngsters in the rear, until from our elevated position we could see the gigantic outline of the monster fully revealed in the sunlit depth below us.

'She was a blue-nose, one of the largest and most savage of the shark species, evidently roused up from her deep repose by the smell of sailor, and not quite satisfied with the substituted salt pork. I shuddered as I thought of my swim, and vowed "never again" to take an equatorial-ocean bath.

'But still, it didn't seem good enough. Mrs. Shark either had been at this sort of game before, or else expected a bigger feed, for after a sniff or two she drew off.

"Go it, mum," seemed to observe the pilot fish; "it is all right; better than nothing." "Yes, mammy, or let us have a try." "No!" she seemed to say in disgust, "that's not the kind of grub I smelt ten minutes ago. I feel inclined to wait." "Take it while you wait," observed the pilot fish persuasively, going round it once more. "It's really good, and I'll get what you leave."

"Well, since it's all we're likely to get, here goes," and with a long-suffering air Madam drew languidly near, and,

turning slowly round, revealed her snowy bosom and horse shoe-shaped archway of a mouth.

‘The half-circle unclosed, and we shivered at the rows of jagged teeth, interlacing after the most approved form of cross-cut saws, which the action revealed.

‘Nearer, in no hurry seemingly, and just as it was about to close, did some warning strike her sharkly mind, as she again drew back? If so, she shook off the presentiment, for next time she came rapidly, gaped, and closed with a jerk.

“Look out for the line. Stand all clear,” yelled the skipper, as he prepared to tug.

‘Jerk! and a piece of Madam’s jaw came out with the pork. It had been a haul too soon.

‘Now began the sport, for Madam showed her temper. Some fish, I suppose most fish, treated in this rough way would have bolted, and never looked behind them. Not so this specimen of the blue waters. With a splash she went back a few yards, and leaping forward with a savage twist turned swiftly round, bolted pork and hook in an angry moment, and then went straight down like a thunder-bolt.

‘Well for us that we had leapt back out of reach of the line; well for the man telling it out that there was no hank anywhere; well that the line was an extra long one, and that the water was plentiful to throw off to the gunwale, for how that fish went for it! What a depth the ocean must be at the Equator! I leaned over and watched that line bolting down, the centre of a spiral column of crystals, never slackening speed until within a fathom or two of its end.

‘There was a moment’s pause, and it grew suddenly slack, and we began to haul aboard.

“Look out against her next bolt,” cried the skipper, as he himself stood out of the way.

‘Up she darted, half out of the water, snapping at the iron chain in her mouth, and then away once more, this time along the surface.

‘And so she flashed along, her black upper fins working about, now half out, now wholly under water, with the

pilot in her rear and the two youngsters hopping about, the pilot looking horribly distressed, like an old retainer who had accidentally poisoned the family, and the young ones knowing something was up, and wondering what it could be.

'To the very end of her tether the old dame spun, then brought up with a jerk, and turned shipward to find out the cause and avenge the insult.

'And so again we hauled and wound up the windlass turn by turn, until we had brought her alongside.'

'And then you lifted her, I suppose,' interrupted the listeners, impatient at the length of the yarn and anxious to end it. 'Your story, old man, is about as long as the line you let out to catch the fish. Wind it up, Dick, my boy, wind it up.'

'There's little more to tell you. As we hauled her out of the water the pork once more appeared, with a fresh supply of shark attached to the hook, and the shark, with a snort, flopped back again.'

Dick clearly had lost all enthusiasm in the narrative after this pull up, for he spoke dejectedly and with an effort.

'Then she got off, after all?'

'No! Opposition acted on her as on all her sex. She got desperate to be caught, snapped at the bait viciously for the third time, and, I believe, rather than be thwarted, fixed in the hook of her own accord, for when we hauled in the next time she came along with the pork intact.'

'You'd have considerable trouble getting her up?'

'Yes, some. One of the seamen, a half-caste American Indian, with a war-whoop that would have done him credit on a prairie or at a Buffalo Bill show, forked out his jack-knife, and sprang overboard with a piece of rope in his hands, and the knife between his teeth, when to the music of her lashing tail he carved out a dead-eye in her hide, and fixed his rope.'

Dick was getting more helpless in his style. Clearly his interest had departed in the story.

'The pilot waited until the last with his charges, and

then, when he had seen his much-loved mistress hoisted fairly over the ship's side, with tears streaming down his venerable cheeks, he mournfully tucked the babies under his fins, and vanished in purple froth.'

'I suppose you cut her up?'

'That's right; we cut her up, punched a marline-spike down her throat to keep her gnawing, hacked off her lashing tail, and dodged generally out of the gory tracks.'

'Did you find anything inside her?'

'Find?' echoed Dick, absently. 'Oh yes! Lots of relics: a wedding-ring, two brooches, part of a decomposed letter from a missing boatswain of the skipper's, informing his wife at home of the thundering wallop in store for her when this utilised husband only got home again; a chew of tobacco, from the size and quality estimated likewise to have belonged to that blasphemous but untimely-taken-away boatswain; some bone buttons, and a bundle of tracts.'

Dick drawled out these details in monotonous tones. Was it through lack of interest, or else was he beginning to embellish his formerly unvarnished tale?

'Yes, we cut her up, made necklaces out of her gleaming teeth, and——'

Dick here brightened up a little.

'The best bit of the whole was that when I told that story to a London audience, and mentioned how the beast's severed heart leapt about the deck like a lively frog for six or seven hours after, until the sun went down, a wiseacre of a clergyman who was present solemnly told me that he might swallow the rings and buttons, even go the length of making a single pill out of that bundle of tracts, but when it came to the beating heart—No! Principle compelled him, as a humble minister of the Gospel, to decline that with thanks.'

CHAPTER XXX

INSECT LIFE

Coast Scenery from Sydney to Brisbane—Moreton Bay and Brisbane River—Impression of Long Ago regarding Foreign Countries—Habits of Insects—Mosquitoes, Scorpions, Centipedes, Fleas, Ants—A Great Battle on a Limited Field.

WE certainly did not loiter on the way between Sydney and Brisbane under the management of our energetic captain ; never had the engines so much work to do, or the piston so many strokes to make up and down. If he was keeping farther out to sea than was his usual custom, he meant to make up the extra distance by extra speed, for we literally boiled along the blue opposing waves.

Past Newcastle, the chief shipping-port of New South Wales, with its fixed white lighthouse of Nobby, which we can see plainly as we pass, it being night time.

Sometimes we lose sight of land altogether as we cross a bay, but we always make up again close enough to the points to let me get good sketching. Past Port Stephens, Sugarloaf Point, Cape Hawke, Crowdy Head, Port Macquarie—one of the most picturesque seaports all along the coast, and centre of a large planting district, the outcome of the productive lands about the Macleay, Hastings, and Clarence Rivers.

Point Korogoro looms up boldly as we shave it, then Trial Bay, where they are making great harbour works, and which is intended to be the main centre of the New England District.

We next sight Smoky Cape, Solitary Island, with its lighthouse, Fish Island with the white waves breaking against its barren sides, Trial Bay, with the very small white granite station of Arakoon, Capes Byron and Danger. We are now in the vast colony of Queensland, and in the region of the great squatting paradise, the Darling Downs.

Past Beenleigh, Stradbroke Island, Cleveland, Moreton Island, and into Moreton Bay, and near to our journey's end.

We have beaten time by six hours, and the rival company by twelve, and the captain is once more jubilant.

Stradbroke Island is the second largest in the Colony; it is thirty-three miles long by six broad. Moreton Island comes next, and is twenty miles by six.

Moreton Bay, or Harbour, is forty miles long by seventeen miles wide, and receives the water of six navigable rivers—the Narang, Pimpana, Logan, Brisbane, Pine, and Caboolture; it is formed by the Islands of Birbie, Moreton and Stradbroke, as well as the mainland, and gives a safe anchorage in any part of it to all sizes of vessels.

I have seen some curiously-shaped mountains, but nothing so strange as the shape of the Glass House Mountains as they are seen from Moreton Bay. It was Captain Cook who named these, from their likeness to glass-houses. I did not quite see the resemblance myself, as the two outermost ones looked more like gigantic ant-hills or African huts, while the centre one was like a carved elephant's tusk placed upright; they are on the mainland, and not far from the sea coast.

A pleasant bay this is to sail into, and filled with old associations, with a busy and fertile river, the Brisbane, up which we steam for the twenty-five miles between the bay and the capital—low, muddy banks when the tide is in, with reeds beyond watermark. Vessels of all sizes lie about, or sail up and down, clouds overhead breaking up the sky, and settlers' huts, Chinese and European, dotting the shores behind, with the gum tree forming a picturesque background.

Years ago these Glass House Peaks were the first Australian landmarks which met my eyes after four months' uninterrupted ocean line, and the shores of Brisbane my first experience of a foreign land.

When we read about a country which we have never seen, we are very apt to form our own ideal of that country. And, as a rule, in that ideal land the sun generally smiles upon the fruit trees and the flower-bespangled plains, and Nature puts on her most seductive costume.

Snakes do not sojourn there, nor centipedes; the fire-flies may twinkle about, but the mosquitoes only hum.

A hot country is quite pleasant to think about on a cold night, is it not ?

After we had lost sight of old England's shores, and while we forged along the deep blue ocean under a soft blue velvety sky, or lay on deck watching myriads of strange stars blazing up above, or leaned over the taffrail and followed with our eyes the line of silver light that flashed from our ship's side and sparkled away into the blackness of that boundless waste, we wrought out mental pictures of the land before us, sketched them in vaguely, spent time over them course by course until they were finished to the last touch—and they were always bright and cheery, I can tell you.

I don't think I ever put a rain-cloud in one of these mental pictures, the sky was always blue and fair ; there were palm trees always waving their feathery tops, and bananas always wagging their loaded tails.

I wasn't quite so sure what bananas were, nor how high the pine-apple trees grew out there, but I knew that they were good eating, and I had seen a date, and tasted the milk of the cocoa-nut, and so I felt pretty well content.

I never saw any dust there except gold dust, and that lay about by the sackful, so I had no cause to complain of being choked.

So I drew, and so the vessel drew every day nearer its port ; months became weeks, weeks grew into days, days shrivelled into hours, and hours brought us to Moreton Bay, with its sharks. The tug carried us up the river Brisbane, where we tasted our first fresh bread and colonial mutton, and cracked our first fancy about gentle heat. We landed at Brisbane Quay, to be greeted by thousands of touters, tens of thousands of ragged hungry hangers-on, and hundreds of thousands of famished mosquitoes.

These latter came on in legions—ten thousand legions to the man ; they came in hosts, in clouds, with columns of burning dust, without a speck of gold about it to console us ; palm trees were from home, pellucid streams a dead fallacy, fireflies too uncertain to be considered, and bananas a tattered failure.

Nothing was like what we had dreamt it ; only the snakes and the centipedes and mosquitoes came above the mark.

This was the reaction of course, the first stroke between the eyes that drove away idle fancy before the stern face of reality. Afterwards, when the dream had become subordinate, and we could look upon things dispassionately, we found ways of treating with even mosquitoes, and means of evading the sand clouds.

Queensland, when we landed, was suffering sadly from an emigration surfeit. People without any capital, many without proper trades, had immigrated by thousands, expecting to find a warm welcome and an easy berth provided for them the moment they set foot ashore, the consequence of their own and the emigration company's want of foresight being that before very long they were homeless and bootless loafers, without either much hope or much desire left in them to better their condition.

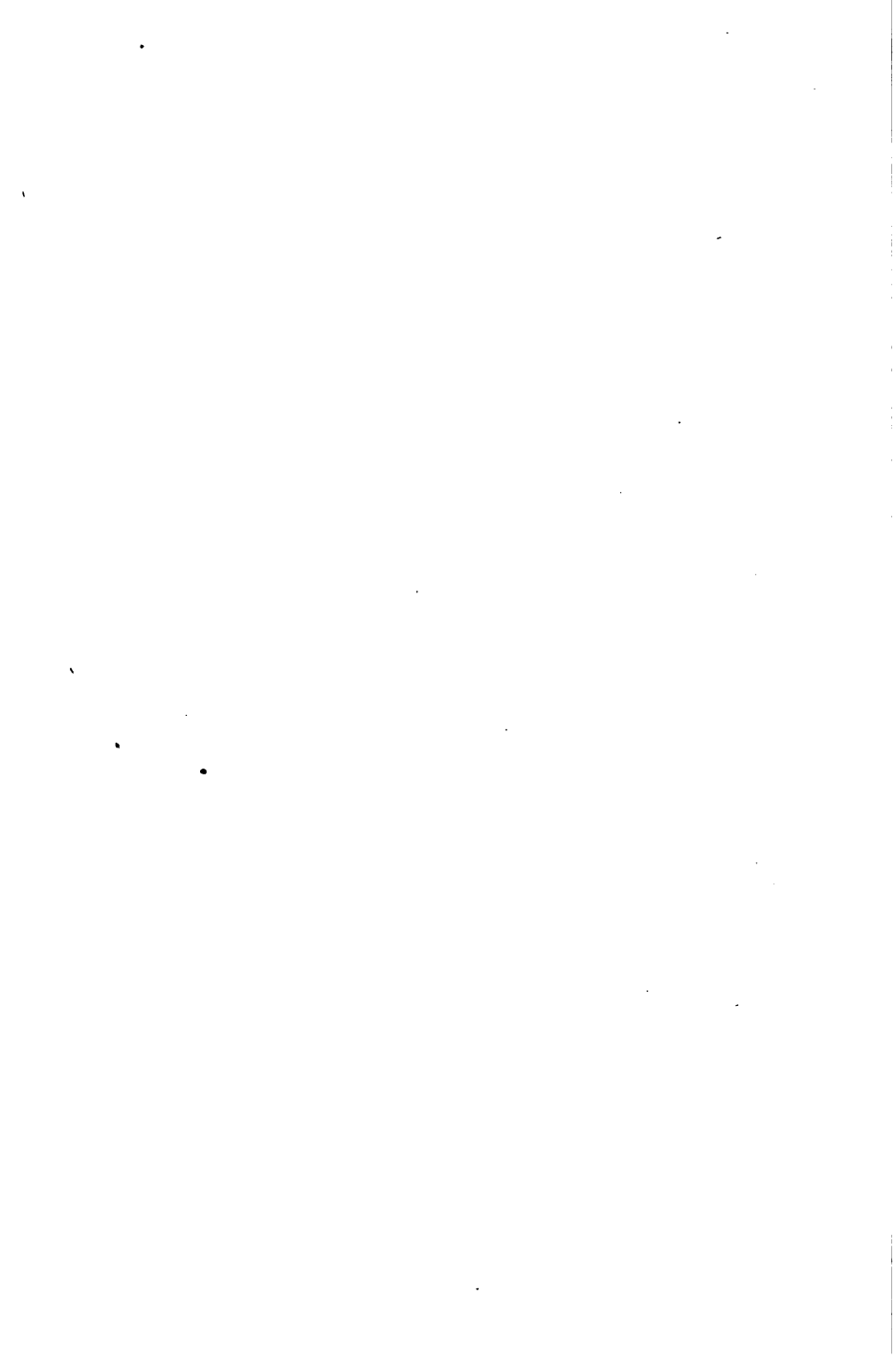
Talking about warm welcomes, I experienced a most strikingly warm one on the day of my arrival. I saw on the wharf as we moored alongside hordes of barefooted loafers, male and female, and seeing only an occasional pair of boots here and there, I fancied they were the exception, and that the rule of that country was ease before elegance, and so inclination backing up the force of example, I just paused to take off my boots and socks from my swelling feet, and the first object which I landed upon, with my bare soles, was an iron plate which had been laid down a few moments before, red hot, on that wharf to cool.

It may appear strange to those accustomed to red-hot plates, and I hope I did not act injudiciously ; yet I must tell you that I did not linger upon that plate, neither did I strike up the dignified position one might expect from an exile greeting his adopted land for the first time. I did say a few words, however, which I need not now repeat, as I left my roasted soles behind me, and sought out a quiet position by the river to cool my feet in for the rest of the day. Ah ! that was a warm welcome.

Brisbane at this time was a gay place, consisting mostly of wood houses which their owners raised up with the help of some neighbours on a moonlight night, painted and papered



BRISBANE FROM THE RIVER



next day, and held their first party in the night after. You might pass a bare paddock some evening, when a cart of wood and some piles were being unloaded, and repass the same paddock next morning to find a house erected, verandah and fence complete, and the proprietor gravely mixing up his white lead to begin the next stage, decoration.

Or, if the first position did not please the owner, it was no uncommon sight to see him and family take up their house and walk to the next block, or half-dozen streets off, as the new locality might have been decided on. That is one advantage of a wooden house.

Brisbane on a sunny day—and that was every day for at any rate nine months in the year—was a cheery place to live in, despite its excessive heat, its snakes ashore, and sharks afloat; of course you could not venture to sit down on a grass plot, if you were lucky enough to find one, without first beating the ground with your cane for fear of sleeping snakes; and if you felt a creeping sensation under your ducks, it became a matter of speculation as you carefully rolled up the canvas as to whether it would be a soldier ant, a tiger mosquito, a centipede, or a scorpion; sometimes, to be sure, it turned out to be only a colony of fleas; but again it might be either of the others.

Fleas are not very respectable members to introduce to the notice of a polite audience, but still, as an undoubted fact, even in this country, where the sight of one solitary straggler is a blush-raising evidence of their being, I feel constrained to give them the place which their colonial importance entitles them to in my experiences. Fleas abroad are by no means objects to be ashamed of as they are with us; indeed, it would be very little use to feel there as we do here, seeing that they are everywhere, and on everything animate and inanimate. I have seen the white dresses of ladies embroidered round the skirt with about three inches of what appeared to be black lace, but which really were countless hordes of wrangling insects; gentlemen with deep black borders round their white linen trousers, so thickly were they clustered that you could only at rare moments catch a glimpse of white between—moments when a few weakly or

immature members were knocked off the course by the old stagers. And yet, crowded though they were, they were so modest in their pretensions that I have been worse worried with one home-bred marauder than I ever was with the countless hordes abroad. Perhaps they were, like human office-seekers, so many candidates after each place that they lost all the time abusing one another, and so forgot what they were fighting about. I sometimes think that is how we got off so easily.

Now mosquitoes are very different in their mode of treating a victim, especially if they can get hold of a nice fat juicy new chum; you can always tell new chums the moment they land by their fresh and rosy complexion, and if you fail to recognise a new chum on the first day of his arrival, I defy any one, with half an eye, to be able to mistake him the day *after* his arrival. Talk about fresh complexions, or raw beefsteaks, or a prize-fighter after twenty-eight rounds; these are only mild symbols compared with the new chum after he has had his first night with the mosquitoes. You search in vain for nose, lips, or eyes; if lucky—that is, if let off easy—you may trace where the ears once were, or might make a rough conjecture as to the probable position of a chin, but the rest of that puffed-out scarlet outline is a blank space; from a slight pucker there comes a muffled voice, but even the blasphemy you ought to expect, seeing the condition of the object before you, and knowing what he was capable of in this line yesterday, becomes lost as it struggles out in a melancholy monotone.

I learned to smoke battling with mosquitoes. I used to concoct the vilest abominations, and, setting fire to them, revelled, even while I choked in the reeking of that awful incense to keep them at bay. I used to oil myself from crown to toe before retiring, like an Indian housebreaker; and when olive oil could not keep them off I used to try candle grease, until life became a burden, all to have the quiet hour of peace which I never had until I had patiently borne the infliction, and paid the taxes with my blood.

The humming demons! I used to sit up at night with the candle burning outside the mosquito-netting, and listen to their tantalising songs as they hovered all round;

sit up smoking, in spite of heartburn and squeamishness, watching the old reckless ones dash themselves frantically against the barrier; the watchful ones soaring round, on the look-out for a rent or portion not firmly fastened in, through which they might enter and devour; or the thoughtful matrons providing for their young by pushing them through the holes they were too big themselves to enter—signs of insect intelligence and devotion which never touched me half so much as they might have done had the food provided for those graceful and melodious young things been another person instead of myself.

It is rather difficult, you must all admit, to give that grave and philosophical attention, or calculate with the deliberation required to satisfy scientists, the exact virulence of a wasp's poison if the sting has been just inserted in your own body. We might even give the matter more fair play if the objects of our calculation were the wasp and a very dear relative, but it is difficult to calculate calmly between the wasp and ourselves.

We have some very clever insects in this country, I will admit, but they are complete duffers compared with the insects abroad—the ants in all their many varieties. I remember once sitting down on a tree-trunk in the bush to ruminate, and as I pondered I was beating the ground idly with my cane, not looking much at what I was disturbing, when after a time, happening to glance in that direction, I saw that I had cut a poor soldier ant in two—there he lay, writhing, with his red jacket on one side of my stick and his black trousers on the other.

I felt sorry for this idle destruction, and stopped at once the pitiful game, and, looking remorsefully in the direction of that slaughtered life—a life perhaps more useful at that moment than mine had hitherto been—I perceived that I had done much more damage with that senseless beating of my stick. I had broken up the deposits of years, perhaps of centuries—mosses, and lichen, and fine tissues of roots. I had desecrated homesteads, for I saw hundreds of families rushing away from the earthquake without even taking time to gather up their relics or belongings; and I knew that I had wrought destruction and caused

consternation far beyond where my imperfect eyes could pierce.

I was exercising myself with these reflections and humiliations, as we might all do every instant of our clumsy lives if we only took time to consider, when I saw a friend of my military victim march up. Stopping at the black half, now still, he examined it carefully round and round; next came under scrutiny the red half; then an examination of both; a near inspection separately, and then a distant survey of both and the space between; a long pause as he apparently pondered upon the cause, then a dash at my stick, as if the inspiration had struck him suddenly that this was it; up the inanimate stick his bright eye wandered to the active hand that had used it; and then off, with resolution in his tread, he passed out of my sight.

'Is he frightened,' I wondered, 'that he made away like that?'

The day was inviting to loaf, and so I loafed and watched my dead soldier. Presently came along a little black ant and also examined the corpse, but more with the air of a speculator than one afflicted; he caught hold of first one piece and tried to drag it away, and finding it too much of a load he tried the next; both, however, were too heavy for him, so he too departed with an air of business.

By-and-by from where the soldier had disappeared there came along a couple of redcoats; straight up they came to where the body lay, and after a repetition of the former examination, they consulted and went off in different directions.

Next came back the black ant with six more, and began to drag off the spoil in unison, three to each half; but after a time I saw they were tired, for three left the red-coated half, and, joining the others, bore away the other half easily.

While they were gone, I saw from the different directions which the two soldiers had gone a crowd of soldier ants appear, each band being led on by one soldier ant who walked in front. Up they marched in beautiful order, and,

joining together by the red half of their dead comrade, began their court-martial. I thought, as I watched them, that there was a movement of surprise when they could only see one portion of the dead ant, and that this seemed to alter some former determinations which they had agreed upon; for, after looking at the stick, they all drew back and worked about amongst themselves as if excited and talking.

While they were thus engaged, the six black fellows returned for their spoil, and, seeing the enemy in force, they retreated with speed.

This was seen by the soldiers, and two made off after them, to be again driven back by a crowd of black ants, who came on as if by magic from every quarter in countless hosts.

Now began a war between the black ants and the soldier ants. The soldier ants were bigger and stronger, but the black ants were about a hundred to one; and while the soldiers knocked them down by the dozen, they swarmed up again on their backs and all over them, until I hardly saw any red at all.

It was a great battle I can tell you, although all going on at my feet: squares were formed, and battalions drawn off, but numbers won the day. The soldier ants like the gallant French people, and the black hordes who swarmed over every place seemed to me like the Prussian legions who were at that time lying before Paris.

I saw who was going to win, and forgot, in my sympathy for the big fools, the destruction I had already wrought upon one of them; for lifting up my stick, I moved it amongst them, breaking up all their battle lines, and sending the black myriads scurrying away in all directions.

When peace was once more restored, the remnant of the soldiers—for they did not seem so frightened by the stick—gathered once more together to consult; and it wasn't the number they had lost which seemed to concern them so much as the half of the soldier which I had killed. That was the reason of their coming together, and it had to be settled first.

While I looked they came to a determination, and made

a rush up my stick, up inside my trousers, up inside my sleeves; their purpose was revenge, and I quickly had my punishment—for soldier ants can bite, I assure you—and in a few moments I was jumping about half-mad from the attack of that regiment of redcoats. And while I jumped about shaking them from me and killing them in self-defence this time, the wise little black ants, too mercantile to bother about profitless vengeance, again assembled by the thousands, and occupied themselves in bearing off, for burial or for food, the dead carcasses of fallen friends and foes.

I have seen a dead dog thrown down one day in the sun, and a day or so after have picked up the skeleton glittering white, without the faintest vestige of marrow or flesh upon it. A tramp goes along a road, and turns into the bush, and losing himself within a very short distance, is known only by his shirt and trousers in less than a month after, when some stockrider's nervous horse shies aside from the shining skull. Ants very soon polish bones in the colonies.

CHAPTER XXXI

BRISBANE

Early Days of Brisbane—A Gold-Digging Episode.

BRISBANE, with its wooden houses all painted white, and the trellised verandahs round about them, some with grape vines and Passion fruit clustering up, and the dripping, tattered fringe of a banana tree growing round the end, is picturesque after the first shock is over—the first shock of eternal glare, dry dust and white or red sand—fields of caked earth instead of grass, for that is all fired up by the sun; and all vegetation is useless unless watered by the owners. It is a gay city, in spite of the ragged loafing emigrants who stalk about by the hundred in rags that would make even a Belfast beggar blush, and that is going a long way down the social scale of tatters.

Here women meet you during the day in the daintiest of dimity and muslins that are cooling to look upon, and sail along the silvered pavements on a moonlight night—and such immense globes of gold those southern moons are!—with variegated silks that shimmer and rustle with prismatic thrills that strike upon the senses like chords of music.

It is a sight to remember on a moonlight night—the great spiders' webs, those tarantulas about the size of saucers, with the long hairy claws, spinning thick lines from passage to passage, and even at times across the lanes, from verandah to verandah, with those vast geometrical problems hung up between the passers-by and that golden disc, catching the heavy dew, and upon which are shed gleaming fly-wings, stars shooting down sparks of mussel-shell tones; spider-webs which catch the passers-by who may have stepped aside from the beaten track with tenacious and dank but tender welts across the eyelids—welts that strike deeper than the skin, although so lightly dealt, for the chill of expectancy, shot from the surprise, rushes down to the heart, and checks, for a moment, its beats. Those vast geometrical shapes that were repeated in silver and sable on the pavement; the blackness from the verandah roof, with the white glare on the end beyond; the lamps under their coloured shades inside furnished rooms, or well-filled shops—butchers' shops with their rich tones, grocers' shops with their glittering fruit stalls with their variations of delight!

The men smoking in their white trousers and broad straw hats, and puggarees falling to the neck, and inside billiard-rooms young men working hard with their chalked cues over green tables, or marking scores on black screens with white stops, or wiping the large sweat-beads from their foreheads against their rolled-back, cream-tinted flannel sleeves.

Spiders in Australia are by no means the harmless workers of web-craft that they are here. Black spiders and the mighty tarantulas bite, and bite dangerously—I have known a man to be laid up for six months in hospital through the bite of a spider; for that matter I have seen people

taken to the hospital from the effects of mosquito biting; but cases of this kind, like cases of snake, centipede, and scorpion biting, are very rare, considering the number, variety of the species, and the chances they constantly have of exercising their venom.

In lifting a stone which has lain for some time on the ground you may dislodge a whole menagerie of varied and ugly specimens of poisonous biters: the puny little scorpion, who turns up its tail and pierces both ends; the centipede, with about an inch of green-yellow at the end and the rest of its six or ten inches of length of the most revolting pallid dun. I always hated the look of these more than the snakes; perhaps it was from their unsympathetic colour, or the after-thought of my first night's experience in Queensland.

There had been a tropic shower—quite an event at that season—and Brisbane looked its very freshest, as I opened the windows of my bedroom, and drank in the fragrance from the fruit trees, the pine-apples, and the trumpet lilies, wafted in on the night air, rain-cooled, ozone-freighted. Coming, as it did, from the direction of Moreton Bay, I forgot the dust of the mid-day; even the recollection of that red-hot plate was deadened into a dull numbness. It was all delightful, all my fancy had hoped it would be, and so, as yet mosquito-innocent, I gave a sigh of intense contentment, and, blowing out my candle, turned into bed.

For fully ten minutes I lay, looking through the netting round my bed, through the black framework of the window, like elaborated carved work, where the vine leaves broke the straight edging of the squares, and showed me the opal lustre above the distant bush-outline which preceded the rising of the moon. A deep grey cloud or two hung above that lustre like gigantic flying foxes with outspread wings, dark against the blue of the sky beyond, where stars were hung like electric lamps, towards that opal lustre at the horizon.

And through all this tropic loveliness came the sea-air, softly breathing past the pine-apple beds and the orange orchards and the trumpet lily trees, heavily laden, since it first caught up the ocean brine-aroma, with the refinement of those varied scents.

Outside I heard the croaking chorus of a community of frogs, the old king leading off with his bass, and the others going up the scale according to sex and age until it wound up with the shrill treble of the youngest chorister; a song without a termination, bass, tenor, alto, and soprano, only broken at intervals by the jeering burst of mockery from the laughing jackass in the distant bush, as it caught up its victim snake, and, darting swiftly above the highest gum tree, shrieked out with wild laughter to see it sink prone through the air and break its back against a bare branch as it fell to earth.

I heard the locusts ticking and chirruping, and the vine leaves softly rustle, and through all the melody the everlasting humming of those tiny tormentors of whose existence I was yet to learn. This humming was soothing to my ignorance, and I was just inhaling all the delicacies and confusing all the melodies, and passing away from it all into sleep, when a heavy soft thud from the rafters broke my mosquito netting and hit the coverlet above my shoulder, driving, in one sudden bang, sleep from my eyes, music from my ears, perfume from my nostrils, and filling all my senses instead with intense horror.

It was too heavy for anything my imagination could conceive except a serpent. The soft thud was too horribly suggestive of snakedom for me to be calm. I had no matches to strike a light, even if I dared move, which I candidly confess I dared not. I could only yell out; this I did, incoherently connecting snakes with fire and murder and a few other popular war-cries, which speedily brought to my rescue the landlady and lodgers, male and female, in their varied conditions of night attire.

It was only an old venomous centipede, about ten inches long, which had been the cause of all this disturbance—drawn out of its nest in the shingles by the hour's heavy rain, and coming down to my bed for more comfort, so the landlady lightly told me, as she daintily picked it up with the snuffers, and coolly held it over the candle till it frizzled and fried and writhed, and polluted the air with its smoke, while I lay shivering with disgust and horror, watching it being reduced by that practical lady into a brown cinder.

I got used to these interruptions in time, as I got used to sandflies and fleas, mosquitoes and muddy drinking water; meat that was three parts maggots; cockroaches by the shovelful, and blow-flies in shoals. I got used even to snakes; learnt to lie down quite comfortably and go quietly to sleep, even although I might be told that the night before I had slept with a black snake (certain death if it had bitten) under my pillow, as was once the case with me. I got used to watching my feet as I walked, and grew to think as little of the swift rustle and sudden glitter of a retreating snake as I might think of a playful lizard in the sun, or the walloping of a clumsy iguana amongst the rocks; used to whisking my horsetail in the evening, and smoking out enemies in the night; used even to the black fins of the sharks, who watched us like hungry dogs over a bone when we bathed in the bay; used to everything, the heat and the cold, and even to gold coming up along with earth in buckets. I didn't get so much chance of being used to that, though, as I did to the buckets coming up with earth without the gold.

I wish that I had time to tell you all the interesting incidents which I know connected with gold-seeking. Of course we are all gold-seeking every hour of our lives excepting Sundays, and even then many of us are gold thinking (more is the pity); for if we consider the question in any of its aspects, it seems a very pitiful game to spend so much time and thought and energy over. In its virgin state gold is a soft, unusable, dirty-tinted metal, fit for nothing that we may put it to except it be as a very indifferent writing medium. It makes, in its original state, a poor pencil, and that is all. We cannot make a pot of it, or a weapon of defence, and it is only sometimes that it will mark on paper, a bit of blacklead being a hundred times to be preferred to a bit of gold ore for that purpose.

What pictures I have seen on the diggings—doctors, schoolmasters, lawyers, ministers, all trades and castes, digging and sweating, and smoking and swearing—winning a nugget by hours of labour below ground, and losing it on the surface at Nap or poker in a few moments!

Wives waiting hungrily on telegraphic messages, for-

getting all about the husbands in the intensity of their eagerness to hear their 'luck'; and the husbands also forgetting, in the moment of luck, all the purpose of their coming, and washing their faces in champagne, or lighting their pipes with bank-notes, drinking and gambling not allowing them to spend the money fast enough.

I fear that I cannot tell you much about the good of gold, although I could tell you stories by the dozen of the influence for evil which it had on the seeker.

Life at the diggings is a fever, a riot, the Rake's Progress intensified and concentrated from six parts into one; plenty of excitement and tearing about, plenty of speculation and betting on results, oceans of 'stringy-bark' and adulterated brandy; a fast four days in the week and a burst on the sixth, heart-diseases and palpitations, and over it all an infatuation that is almost incurable. The 'digger' cannot go back to calm life any more—respectability, and what's short of it, are no longer tolerable after 'damper,' red flannel, and Panama hat; if he is a worker he goes down below, like the whale, to work, and only comes up like the whale to 'blow.' If he is of the tribe of Israel, a speculator, he stops on the surface, starts a store or a drinking 'shanty'—a weighing shop or a betting 'booth'—and gets back to the cities wealthy, healthy, and wise.

The Chinese are the only people who, by honest labour, save money at the diggings; they neither eat nor drink too much, and so are always active and wary to take advantage of a chance, and that is the true secret of luck.

I knew a motherly woman once in Brisbane who rose early and worked all day to keep her children and her house nice. Her husband was a mason; made good wages when at work—twelve shillings for eight hours' work—so that they were comfortable, for people do not require to spend much on dress or food; and if they live quietly—that is, without drink or cards—the necessities are a mere trifle; freehold property, ground cheap, and fashion not much of a consideration.

I have seen her children running about in the warm sun in their night-dresses, free of encumbrances in the shape of braces, stays, and petticoats, happy in their easy

folds, able to enjoy the use of their limbs. They scrambled from the bath to the sand-heap, gaining health without ceremony as children ought to do, with nothing on to injure if they tumbled, nothing fine on to keep their mothers in a fume of excitement lest they spoil the velveteen or the starch with the rumpling freedom of careless childhood.

How it does pain me to see a dressed-out child ; how it must pain the parents, and how it must afflict the child.

He or she wants to be down in the sand, or dust, or mud ; there is no attraction, in the gratification of juvenile vanity, like to the intense delight of a dirty puddle, or a nice muddy paste to make pies with. To be able to go over the ankles and splash ! splash ! splash ; what can come up to it—to squat down in the mud and knead away at all sorts of shapes ! To be able to fling up the sand or dust, and fill one's pockets with it, and cram it down the necks of boy and girl friends ! To pick up all sorts of muck—old boots, dirty rags, torn pictures out of buckets, broken bottles and saucers, treasure-trove all to childhood, which is barred by that horrid nightmare, dress and respectability.

You need only look at the little boy or girl who can tumble without any fear of breaking their mother's heart, the little boy or girl with a half-dirty nightdress in a warm enough country, to find the perfect symbol of free-and-easy enjoyment.

Well, this friend of mine was a mother of that sort ; she went about herself easy and free, looking after the comfort of her husband and her children, and taking her own ease between times when she could, for a mother cannot have her sixteen hours off work and eight hours on. She must rest by snatches.

She was very scrupulous about dirt : if water was to be had at all, from water-butt or sunk well, she got it and used it. Her husband never was without a clean shirt or fresh pair of overalls ; never had occasion to growl, as he plunged into trousers or shirt of a morning, at the want of a button ; spiders had no comfort in that establishment ; and if a cockroach or two did hunt the back kitchen behind the stove, it was in a skulking sort of manner they ventured

out, as if the dread was on them that they would never get back again.

Her husband never had to look for a basin, or have an empty bucket crammed into his fist the moment he showed his hot, sand-grimed face at five o'clock. She was one of those wise women who know that men are animals to be a little studied the first moment they put in an appearance; that men like to find things at home ready and waiting for them when they come back from what they call work (of course it is mere work-flirtation compared with the perpetual and jarring labour of the woman, but that is not the point). She knew, from experience, that men hate to be bothered with children the first moment of their coming home; that they are brutal enough to expect an easy welcome and ready smile, in spite of the troubles the women are longing to pour into their ears.

CHAPTER XXXII

BRISBANE (continued)

A Gold-Digging Episode (continued).

THIS friend of mine knew all these matters, and acted accordingly; she knew that she must bottle up her confidences of wrong and trouble and affliction until she had listened to all he had to tell her, until he was fed and washed, and had his hair brushed, and his pipe filled and lighted, and his shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and then, remembering that there was something else wanted to complete the perfect comfort and felicity of the hour, asked of his own accord to have the children produced.

She knew that men, like cats, hate to see water splashing about floors; dinner-dishes lying steeping inside basins in odd corners: and although demanding, as a strict marital right, clean linen, &c., that they will not tolerate the sight of the cleaning; that the sight of a shirt, or a pair of socks hanging up on a clothes-line is like a nightmare to them, whether inside or outside of the house; that the

steam from a wash-tub, the bubbling from a washing-pot, the froth of soapsuds, and the other signs of desolation which betoken that most awful test of matrimonial felicity, washing-day—dirty-faced, whimpering children, red-armed, flush-browed matron, and discomfort unutterable all round, are abominations from which even a male angel will fly howling to the nearest public-house bar.

She knew this, I suppose, the first year of marriage, when she had nothing else to do except study the habits of the wild animal she had captured, and she took care that he came home to nothing distasteful to him. A dry floor met his eyes; a comfortable-looking wife in fresh print, easy-fitting as became the office of a mother-nurse, greeted him with a placid air, as if the machinery of her daily routine went smoothly, like well-oiled wheels. A table was set and ready for him, and a savoury smell from the cooking-shed behind stole through his nostrils to his heart; the youngsters were outside rolling about in their undress uniform; at the shed door he knew he would find a bucket filled with water, and soap and towels, and on the mantel there was no danger of the pipe-shank being broken. These were imperative duties, and she had the sense to know it.

This friend of mine was a perfect model of a good wife and mother at the time I speak of, stout and healthy, with a shape like the female saints of Peter Paul Rubens; she did not bother about bracing in her waist, because it was too hot, and because her husband was better pleased with her as she was, and he was the only person whom she cared to please in the world. She wore a loose wrapper that touched her as little as possible anywhere, kept her cool, and allowed the figure to fold and curve, as Nature intended it to.

She at that time did not bother her head as to what people round about her thought or said; she was not very sociable with her neighbours, as she had such a lot to get through before five o'clock; so they did not often trouble her with their company, for gossips do not care to sit down and chatter to a woman who is bustling about her house all the time and replying only in monosyllables. She was very careful about her children being thoroughly washed

with soap and hot water at night ; very scrupulous not to let laziness, or pleasure, or fatigue interfere with that duty ; careful not to demand assistance from her husband (unless he proffered of his own accord, which, seeing that she never asked, he generally did) ; careful never to miss a single item of it, no matter how tired out she herself felt.

She was also very particular to give them all a good cold douche of water in the morning, before they set out on their day's journeyings ; very particular that they all got their hominy and goat's milk, the colonial substitute for our porridge and milk, which everyone ought to take in the morning ; they all had their own goats there.

She was very careful that the hominy and all the dishes were well served, and that they had each meal regularly to a moment, and timed herself so that this regularity did not interfere with the hours that her husband was present ; so that her duty towards her children never interfered with her duty towards the man who brought in the money which gave them all those comforts.

She soon learned that butter and fatty dishes made her children feverish, and disturbed her own and her husband's rest in the night-time, gave them white faces and hollow eyes in the morning, and brought on all sorts of troubles incidental to childhood, forcing her to get in the doctor and buy physic, and waste more time than she could afford ; so being a woman after the ideal type in the Book of Proverbs, she reasoned the whole problem out, and, testing it by experiments, came to the wise conclusion that, the further doctors were kept from a workman's house the better for all parties, the less medicine a child swallowed the healthier it grew, and that the most effectual methods of keeping the doctor and his drugs out of the house altogether were to study her own health, not to stint cold water and thorough cleanliness, be regular in all the food, and feed her children as much as possible on hominy or porridge, rice, sagos, and all sorts of grains, potatoes and salt when they craved for a change, and flagged on the grains and fruit (of which they had plenty, almost for the picking up—oranges, apricots, peaches, pomegranates, lemons, limes, grapes, figs, bananas, and pine-apples).

She found out what agreed best with them, and kept all the other things out of sight, teaching her children, as we might teach them a prayer, to say 'No, thank you' to rich cakes, currant loaves, and butter pieces. A mutton-chop or a bit of beef represented one of the cardinal vices to those juveniles; if they saw their parents eating them they gazed with great open eyes of wonderment, anticipating horror; as we would look on a man laying a box of dynamite under the foundation of a house preparatory to firing it, so they looked on expecting a catastrophe to follow.

Of course this friend of mine might have reasoned the matter out a little further, including her husband and herself in her conclusions, but as it happened from the results on her family, she did very well indeed. A gossiping neighbour seldom showed up, and when she did she did not stay long: her women-friends thought her a perfect frow and fright with her free, loose wrapper on; her children disgraces to a respectable community for not being be-stayed and be-petticoated enough; the doctor's bill disgustingly paltry, since he had generally to be called in only once a year, and the account squared up with the extravagancies of the Sarah Gamp.

The result of her system was that the olive branches sprouted fast and flourished apace, the undertaker having *grave* cause to pull a long face when he passed that cottage, for not a single little coffin had ever to be ordered for all that increasing crowd coming on so fast; the little crowd, a tumbling, writhing, screaming multitude of red cheeks, fat bare arms and legs—in fact, a most disreputable exhibition of human nature and robust health.

I cannot say that my Brisbane friend trained her children very well according to the orthodox and popular ideas of training. They were not very refined; they fought and quarrelled amongst themselves wildly, and had their mother tearing out after them like a maniac a dozen times a day; but the husband never saw this, the truce had been proclaimed before five o'clock, and if any one had told him that his children were wild or unlamblike, or that his smooth-voiced wife could yell out like an Apache

over a scalp-lock, he would have scouted the idea as a vile calumny. I don't think she had any clear ideas upon theological matters, or that the spiritual state troubled her as much as it might have done; at any rate, she did not go to church as often as her gossiping neighbours went, and was singularly silent respecting religious tenets and speculations; but she taught her children the Lord's Prayer and 'Gentle Jesus,' and took a special delight in seeing them give up their toys and pieces to the little beggars and black fellows who passed the door, and she never allowed them to torture any living thing—if it was venomous, she killed it outright as a duty; if it was not, they were taught to walk round it if outside, and let it go on its own way unmolested, or carry it out and let it go unhurt if it had got where it had no business to be. She was a very curious compound, this friend of mine, having her own ideas upon more matters than you would think a woman ought to have: she herself belonged to the Baptist denomination, yet I never heard her say anything against infant baptism; indeed, she seemed to find truth in all that was self-sacrificing and aspiring to virtue. She was very strong and decided upon charity; she believed in it unquestioningly and implicitly, believed in it in its broadest and widest sense. Her youngest child was taught to *give* without reasoning out where it went to or if it was deserved, taught to give without expectation or regret.

Mercy, also, was another of her most obstinate qualities—not only that human mercy which Portia describes in the trial-scene of the 'Merchant of Venice,' when she says: 'The quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes'—but the mercy of that great and gracious Indian prince, Gautama, the founder of the Buddhist religion, which embraces in its godlike and boundless reverences all things, animate and inanimate, throughout Nature. 'All things that have life, be they feeble or strong, minute or vast—setting the good-will that is boundless, unmeasurable, impartial, unmixed with enmity—prevail throughout the world, above, below, around' (Buddha).

Her children had a host of faults and bad habits. They were half-savage in their robustness, but they were not selfish with their toys or their delicacies, and they never did a cruelty wantonly beyond fighting amongst themselves. They did not quite reverence the milk-providers of the family—the goats. But then, Nanny always can take care of herself, and will not permit any more liberties than she is inclined for. I have seen goats and youngsters arguing out a disputed part of the paddock, but these disputes generally ended in a wild display of bare limbs, a chorus of bellowing, and the goats standing triumphant mistresses of the position.

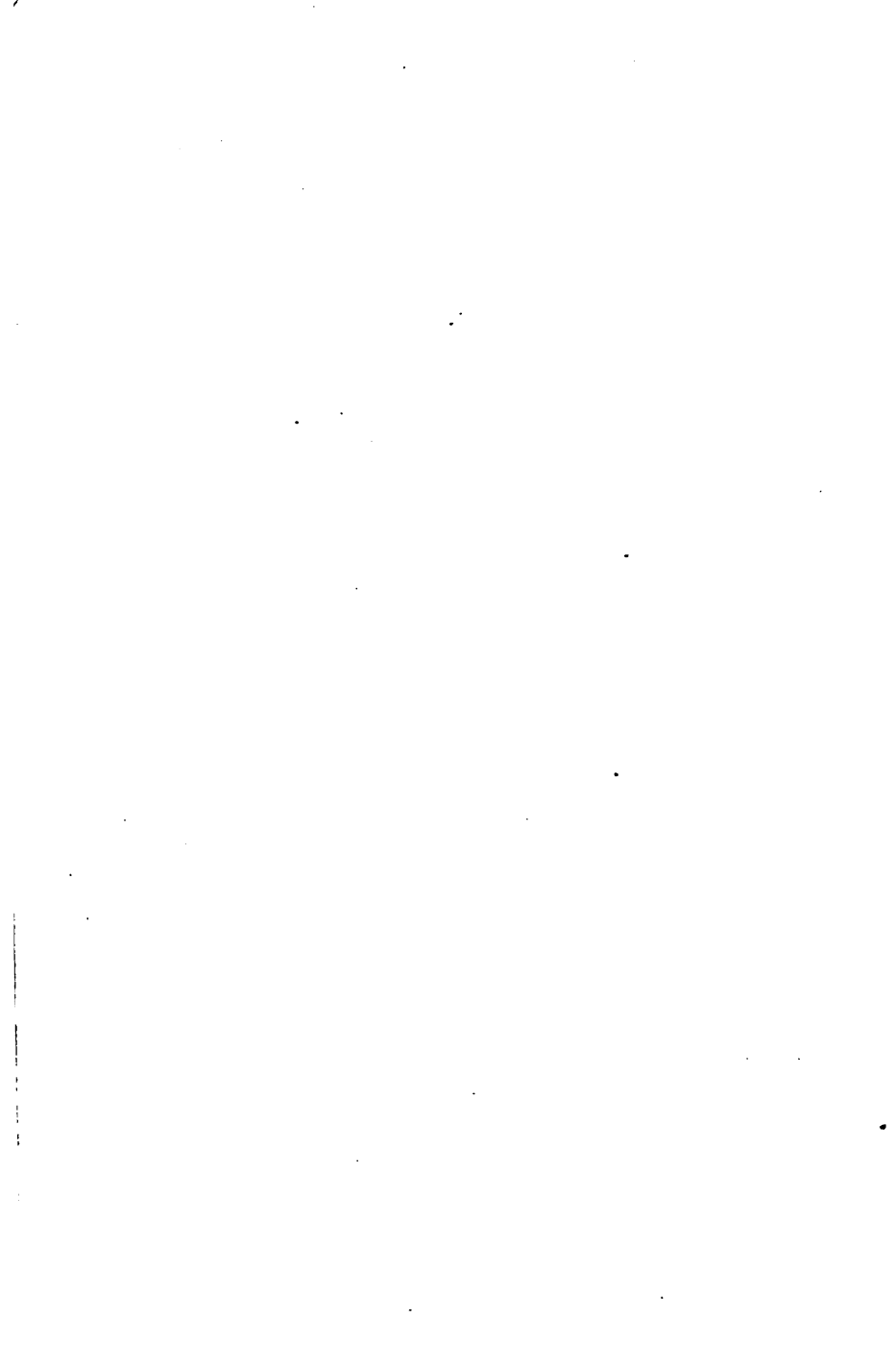
And this was the kind of daily life of my friends, the mason and his wife, when I first knew them in Brisbane. They had everything that they wanted, and put money away in the bank every Saturday night. A smoke satisfied him, or perhaps a glass of grog on the Saturday night after their money was banked. This, and maybe a quart of beer for their Sunday dinner, was all the extravagance they allowed themselves to indulge in. Neither of them read much. A peep at the 'weekly' satisfied them. On Sundays he went to church, holding a post there as deacon; and so, in this way, she managed to get the hours to herself that the children and cooking required, and in this way he escaped seeing any of the discomforts or confusion.

But in the middle of it all, just as if some demon had feared a second edition of Paradise, and wanted to get his infernal hoof into it, the Queensland gold-fever broke out; some prospecting fiends had discovered gold out from Rockhampton, and a wild rush took place; workmen left their work, shopkeepers sold out their businesses for anything they could realise, lawyers flung down their briefs, doctors galloped away from their dispensaries and patients, even clergymen tore off their bands, and joined in the mad stampede.

My friends tried to resist the devil as long as they could—home comforts against the chance of fortune, steady employment against 'luck.' Every day more glowing accounts of finds came down to Brisbane; all his mates,

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nearly, had forsaken the stone-cutting, and some of them were doing well, and urged him very much to join them. I think she held back the longest, but she had caught the infection as well as her husband and everyone else, and so at last she drew out a year's savings, packed up his traps, and, with a fond hopeful hug, bade him go in and win.

It was a wild time ; old men and young women spent all the day and half the night rushing about the Stock Exchange, speculating and betting on the result of next morning's news ; quarrelling and wrangling inside public-house bars, where telegrams were received and given out ; drinking, of course, for you cannot go into a public-house and expect attention to your wants unless you 'shout,' that is, drink and stand drinks all round.

Some trained pigeons, and sent messages that way to those mostly interested, keeping back the public telegrams until the birds had time to go home. There were painful incidents and amusing incidents constantly occurring every hour. One reckless wife, who, on the strength of the telegram of one day 'We've struck it heavy,' from her husband, laid in a stock of dresses and jewellery, carpets, furniture, and utensils enough to satisfy a duchess, was observed the Saturday after smashing her cleaned out, home-coming master from the house-door, which she had taken on credit, with a span new frying-pan, he rushing along for his very life in his ragged pants and shirt, and she in full war costume, satins and jewellery complete, laying on to him with the new frying-pan, and shrieking out in her maniac fury : 'You've struck it, have you, struck it heavy, eh ?'

The telegram had been a false hope, the find which he thought a rich vein of gold being only a few small nuggets and a vain delusion.

The whole life and principles of my friend seemed to alter under the influence of this absorbing passion. Her placid composure left her : she could not work or be content with the letters she received from her husband ; she seemed to have a hunger and thirst on her to hear all the general news, to hear if others were succeeding better than he ; she became restless and more impatient with

her children, glad to get them washed and dressed and off to school as quickly as possible. The neighbours had no cause now to complain that the children were running wild, for they were packed off every day as soon as she could pack them.

She also went two or three times a day to the popular public-house for news, getting acquainted with the wives and fathers of other absent diggers, who also haunted the bar for news, getting acquainted with crowds of people, and standing or taking drinks, as the turn might be. He was doing very well, on the whole, up there, sometimes sending down cash, sometimes getting cash sent up to keep things going; but his letters were always hopeful, for he had a pair of first-rate mining partners, and their claim promised, from the earth-colour and other indications, to be good.

The children were getting to be better behaved and more orderly in their habits, and most certainly becoming more attentive to their lessons, and really good readers. They had every prospect of getting prizes and certificates now, and that was always something, even although they did sometimes have to hurry off to school with only a drink of milk and a slice of bread, instead of the well-boiled hominy of the olden days, and returned sometimes to find their mother out getting news of father, and no dinner ready for them.

My friend also was decidedly getting more careless in her habits, growing redder in the face, more unyielding in her figure; her wrapper was not so tidy either, and sometimes I have heard that she came home and went off to bed herself, falling dead asleep immediately, and leaving her eldest girl of about nine years to put all the other children to bed, and at those times they had to go to bed unwashed and supperless. Still the news was hopeful always, and all going on as they could desire, both up at the diggings and in the school.

About this time, that is, about two months and a half after he had left her, her first trouble came on them; the youngsters all took the whooping-cough, and had to be kept at home; she tried her hardest to nurse them, but it

seemed harder work than before, with her restlessness and impatience to be out hearing the news. At times, when she could no longer bear staying at home, she would get in a neighbour to take her place for a few moments, while she ran down to see what was going on.

On one of those occasions she heard that her husband had hit it richly; it was a vague rumour, but on the strength of it she had to stand brandy all round; no small matter, let me tell you, when drinks are sixpence each, and perhaps forty or fifty people are assembled at a time. But as it was the etiquette of the place, she had to conform to it; more people came in, and more 'shouting' went on, the news becoming more definite; some said they were sure of it, and loaded her with congratulations, and so she had to stay longer and drink more than she wanted to.

When she got home she found the neighbour absent, and her children all alone and very ill. That night she woke up with a start, to find the youngest child choking with the croup.

Next morning a glowing letter confirmed the vague reports of the night before. Her husband had, indeed, struck a heavy lode. It was gold, every shovelful. She got the letter at the moment she was wailing hopelessly over the dead body of her youngest child—the youngest and the cleverest of all the family. And so the undertaker would have got a job at last, only that he was not there to take it in, he also having gone to the diggings; and therefore a new chum, who had bought the melancholy business, stock and all, got the miserable commission. Her husband had the best claim on the diggings. The vein seemed inexhaustible, and the gold of the best quality. He was too busy, and too fearful lest someone might have taken advantage of his absence, to leave his post in order to comfort his wife; besides, he could not have got down in time to bury their bonny bairn. However, it was a grand funeral. He sent down a cheque right off for five thousand pounds, to set up a house and help to pay the expenses, and hundreds of admiring and sympathetic friends gathered round to follow the little one to his last home, and wallow afterwards in champagne and brandy.

That stroke of fate—the loss of this almighty treasure, the child, and the finding of the substitute for it, gold, gold—sent the last of the angels out of that whilom paradise. The strong qualities, mercy and charity, unbalanced in my friend's mind by other necessary qualities, and turned into the wrong groove by chance, or luck, or the curse of gold—devil enough to ruin any Eden—sent her and her husband, who leaned upon her strong will, straight down, like balloons which have lost their gas. Money came pouring in to her, and friends and admirers crowded about her perpetually. She didn't set up a very grand establishment, for the people abroad do not, as a rule, think much about how their houses look if they are comfortable. She got a couple of girls to look after her children and house, and then left them to their own devices, while she administered to her large court of hangers-on.

She didn't dress very stylishly; too long accustomed to the free-and-easy wrappers, she kept to them still; of course they were always spotless and clean when she put them on of a morning, however much they might be rumpled and wine-stained at night.

All day long she lounged in the public-house bar where the telegrams were worked, receiving messages from the camp and dictating replies; drink passed round as freely as water, for she paid all, her generosity getting outcome in this way. No beggars or loafers were turned away empty-handed, but meat and drink were sent about galore. So her fame spread, and she had hosts at her command. How they flattered her and her husband, and drank themselves blind, and sent her staggering home each afternoon elevated into the seventh heaven!

It was a gay and festive court while it lasted; the publican enlarged his premises on her account, and treated her with the reverential respect due to a Princess-royal. The pastor came to remonstrate, but as in her days of wisdom, so in her days of folly, she listened to him with respectful silence, and went on as she had done before. By-and-by her husband came swaggering down with brand-new clothes, and be-ringed and be-chained as only a successful digger can present himself, and so, king and queen

together, they reigned in that bar-court, and listened to the vile adulation, and spent money like air, and drank themselves bloated and hoarse. What oceans of champagne floated out from that bar! cartloads of gold-labelled bottles, full in the morning, were lowered into the cellar, and hoisted outside empty at night.

And that gold vein held out as richly as ever; in five months they had drawn out over fifty thousand pounds, and were now negotiating about a company to work it.

A bustling time, and the children were getting on at school, although the parents seldom saw them, for the house was a home no longer, and the mother was becoming a frowsy, fat, unyielding mass of blotched sottishness, and the father had become a hoven up, empty-headed, self-indulgent, contemptible fool.

Fifty thousand pounds gained, and ten human souls ruined for this life!

There is little more to tell you of these gold victims. The merry court soon ended, not for want of money—for more, and more, and more came in, piling up like a plague; all Brisbane could not have drunk it away—but for want of kidneys and liver. The woman went out first, took dropsy and passed away in no time, and the maudlin fool of a husband, after the death of his wife, took solely to raw spirits and burnt himself up in a couple of months; bad brandy takes a shorter time in the colonies to kill a man than with us here.

I was there the night she died. My friend, whom I had honoured in her days of simplicity, who had been led so far off her feet in the hours of her mad extravagance! She had been tapped some time before, and this was her first appearance for weeks, so we all clustered round her and her husband, to inquire after and *drink* to her health.

She did not look so very bad, although white and puffy and weak-limbed, yet she drank with the rest and spoke pleasantly enough to us all, and felt she was getting better. Then a nice supper was served up in first-rate style, and everyone that liked sat down, and when the table was crammed by the guests, plates and knives and forks were handed round the room and outside on the verandah, even

to the street; a German band came on spec. and gave us music after their style from the moonlit street outside, while we ate and drank. By-and-by some sponge got up and made a speech in honour of the occasion of her resumption of empire, &c., laudatory of course, to which the poor generous-hearted victim dragged herself to her feet to reply.

How well I remember her as she stood in her white wrapper, amid all that crystal of glasses and chandeliers, with the wax candles casting down their lights on that pale puffed-out motherly face, and contending with the white light of the full moon which flooded in at the open windows, broken below by the crowd of faces that filled up the verandah; the brassy sounds of the German band outside mixing along with the silver tinkling from a musical box placed up on the shelf beside the cigar-boxes and cordial bottles; the blotched, expressionless face and podgy figure of that vulgarly-dressed poor drunkard-consort by her side; and the character depicted on the varied faces which were looking or leering, or sneering up at her, as she swayed to and fro, her champagne-glass loosely held in her deformed and trembling fingers!

What a contrast to the woman I used to know only a year before; the woman who had made a man out of the animal her husband. She was going to say something in reply to that sponge, but she was not very ready-tongued at the best, and we waited while she tried to gather her scattered senses and collect appropriate words.

Three moments, perhaps, passed in expectancy, as she stood with her unwieldy figure bulging out from that loose white wrapper and her dough-tinted face bathed in the mixed lustre of candles and moonlight.

Then she found the words she had wanted, and she began--'I think, John, we made a great mistake--'

She got no further; the champagne-glass slid from her relaxing swollen fingers, and fell with a melodious crash on her half-empty plate, and the next instant she was on the floor--dead!

CHAPTER XXXIII

AUSTRALIANS

Brisbane of To-day—Governors Macquarie and Brisbane—Why all true Australians must be strictly Conservative—A Pious Land Speculator—About some Bazaar Horses—From Bowen Terrace.

BRISBANE on September 7, 1890, reached its thirty-first birthday since it was incorporated as a city. Before that it was a penal settlement from as early as 1824, but until 1842 it made no progress; at this date it was opened to free settlers, and at once began to make strides.

Sir Thomas Macdougall Brisbane was the Governor who succeeded Macquarie in New South Wales, and who commenced to build Brisbane town. He was of a scientific turn, and the historians say he was of an amiable character, introducing many wise reforms, especially in penal matters; also at his own expense he secured the first good breed of horses for the colonies. He promoted and encouraged the cultivation of the sugar-cane, vine, tobacco and cotton, established the freedom of the press and trial by jury, and consigned the prisoners to free settlers and squatters, thus showing the colonists how to utilise convict labour for their own good, while greatly lessening the expenses of government. And yet he was unpopular, and in spite of all the benefits he conferred his reign was a short one.

Why? The answer is simple. No king or aristocrat can ever become a leader of the people. The man who will win their sympathy must rise from their own ranks, as an aristocratic friend of mine, who fain would keep to the ancient prejudices, while striving to be a democrat, once complained bitterly of his non-success to touch the hearts of the people he appealed to. 'I feel for them, I love their cause, why will they not listen to me?' 'Because you are not of them and can never suffer or feel like them; sing to your own order, and expose their rottenness and follies, and you will succeed, but leave us alone to those who come from us.'

Macquarie went, in a rough overbearing way, to work

as a master with his men, and never troubled himself to win them, so long as they did his work; he was active and bustling, and gave them no leisure to grumble. Brisbane attempted to win their sympathies without comprehending them in the slightest degree; he gave them opportunities to think, for he was scientific as well as aristocratic in his tastes, so he was before his time in the first place with the rough pioneers, and a decade behind his time in a land where the community were beginning to expand their lungs with the breath of freedom. I mean strictly Conservative liberty of course.

They had all drawn in a full breath of the freedom-developing ozone of Australia, convicts and settlers alike. The home-sickness had worn off, and they were beginning to comprehend and appreciate the superior advantages which this new land offered to them and their children over what the mother-country did or could do, no matter what reforms took place there; and this was what made the pick-pocket and housebreaker forget their old crafts and take so naturally to honesty and perseverance. This balmy atmosphere, filled with hope, wafted away the blood-lust of the murderer, and made him become mild and peaceful. The grand old Conservative instinct, which is in the whole of us, to be owners and possessors of the land, came upon them like a universal infection, and that made them all in Australia loyal subjects, which had forced them to turn thieves and outlaws in the land of their birth—a land which belonged only to the order of Sir Thomas Brisbane, and to which they had no sort of birthright at all, except as housebreakers, poachers, and pickpockets—free renters of the jails and poor-houses.

There would be no more use trying to make democrats of Australians than there would be to make a Conservative of any man of sense in England who is not a freehold landlord for ever and ever. As human beings we are all landlords by instinct, and all conservative, only we must go to Australia to develop the instinct, unless some of our fore-mothers were lucky and attractive enough to lure for us, from their owners the kings, what God should have given to them without conditions, for their children and children's children.

The Brisbane of to-day is divided into four portions—North Brisbane, South Brisbane, Kangaroo Point, and Fortitude Valley. It has a population of upwards of 40,000, has over seventy miles of streets and over 1,920 acres of well-built stone houses, for the wooden ones have all mostly disappeared. I was witness, the first time I was there, of a fire which started in Queen Street and demolished nearly half the town in a night.

Down by one of the flats (they are all drained and built upon now) used to be lovely green fields in the dry season and swamps in the wet. There was an amusing affair happened in this part, where a young man of an enterprising turn of mind, who was one of the converted, attempted to serve God and Mammon at the same time, and very nearly succeeded.

He had bought a lump of this swamp for almost nothing at the Government auction sales, at the time it was at its worst state, to the great amusement of all his acquaintances. As the dry season set in he divided it into small allotments for building purposes, and advertised them for sale. In a little while all the country round Brisbane excepting these swamps was as dry as a brickfield, without a blade of grass to be seen, excepting here, where it grew green, cool, and inviting to those who did not know the cause of it. But to those who did it was a matter of open derision that any man in his senses would ever dream of building a house here; still this sedate young Christian said nothing except offering up fervent prayers at the Wednesday night prayer-meeting, and instead of explaining his hopes, went regularly to church, keeping his own counsel and his weather-eye open.

At last the chance he was waiting for came. A ship-load of thirsting new chums arrived during the height of the dry season, and, looking round the parched land for ground, greedily pitched upon these green allotments as the only thing which reminded them of home.

He sold all his land in a few days, making about fifteen hundred per cent. on his original outlay. It was then that his brethren hauled him over the coals, much to his virtuous indignation, for, as he truthfully enough said,

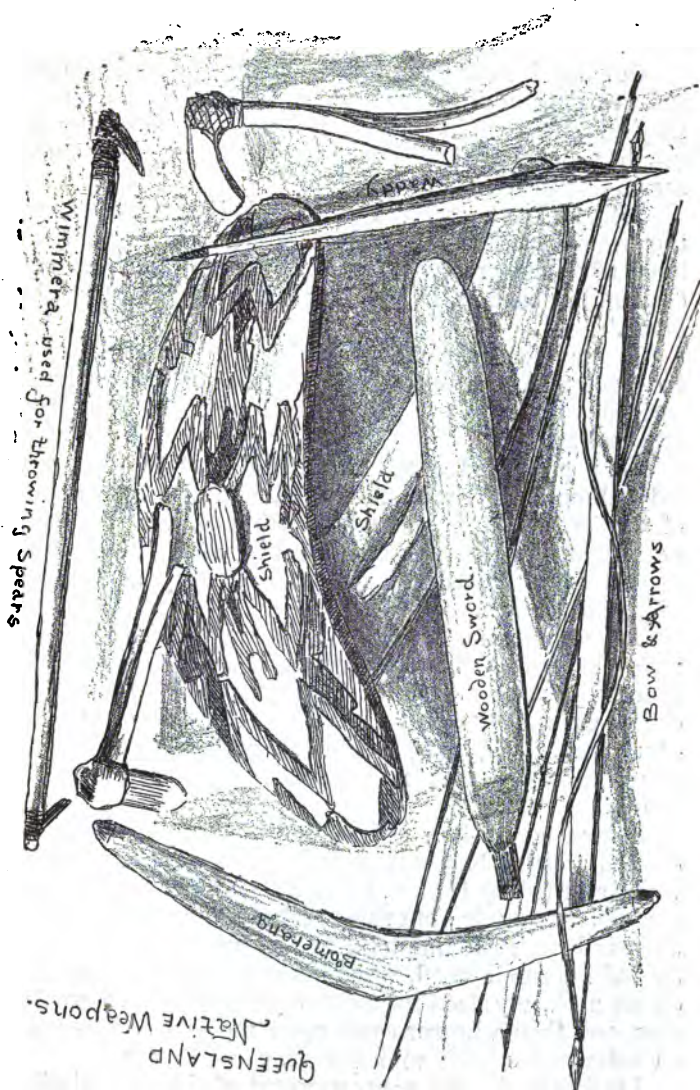
‘Jacob was not above increasing his flocks in any legitimate way, even if out of the ordinary, and he could not see where the blame came in how he increased his store, so long as it was done legally.’

Thus they wrangled week after week, while he stuck to his bargain. He would have won his point also, like honest Jacob, if the rains had not come on while they were still arguing the morality of the question, and nearly drowned some of the purchasers on their own freeholds. They, however, when the swindle was forced upon their understandings by Nature, rose in rebellion to a man, and, taking the side of the deacons and elders, made the pious young man disgorge the money which they had paid him. He had resisted all moral appeals of his Church brethren, but when it came to be a question of lynching, he relented and caved in.

It all depends upon the way a man treats God and Mammon how he succeeds in this life and the next; if the pressure he puts upon them is equal it comes out all right.

As in Melbourne, I got confused about the streets of Brisbane. It had been rebuilt since I last saw it, and was all strange and unfamiliar; Queen Street, which used to be the one respectable street, was now only one of six principal ones. Was the Bazaar still there where I used to hire horses when going picnicing? I don't know, I could not find it. Old friends—they were all dead, or married, and done for. Over the town beyond the Observatory it used to be dense forest, with nothing to be seen but tree-tops—now it was a grassy valley with a clear view of mountains beyond. I wandered discontentedly over it all, along Gregory Terrace, down Wharf Street, out by Breakfast Creek, and over the Botanical Gardens. It was all vastly improved, increasing like a wholesome mushroom, but it wasn't my Brisbane, and so I wearied to be out of it.

The first horse which I got from the Bazaar had a fatal habit of shying at all sorts of imaginary objects and at unexpected moments. He was one of those uncertain beasts which would go along as sedately as a policeman on his beat until your confidence was restored, and your thoughts inclined to wander, then all of a sudden he would take a side waltz



the width of the road and land his unwary rider in the dust. During one day's ride I kissed the earth a dozen times.

One day I went in to hire a horse, and as I was going with a company of ladies and gentlemen, good riders—for they all ride well in Queensland—I asked for a very quiet safe horse, as I did not wish to distinguish myself before my accomplished friends.

'Here is just what you want—a lady's horse,' observed the owner, leading out a long, glossy, small-headed, sleek beast after the greyhound order. 'You'll find yourself as easy on his back as if you were on a cushioned chair at home.'

He was certainly one of the loveliest horses I had ever seen out of a racecourse, and went as his master had described, with long easy gliding strides, so that I hardly felt any motion.

How proudly I cantered past the window of a young lady whom at the time I adored. I fancy she approved also of my get-up and general appearance, for she smiled sweetly and waved her handkerchief after me, as we all started from Brisbane for a pleasant day at Sandgate, 12½ miles distant.

After going for a mile on our way, and seeing some paddocks before us, by crossing which took something from the road, some of the boys proposed a little steeple-chase, so we all set our horses at the fences, and went over them. My horse seemed to enjoy the fun, and took them so easily that it seemed more like flying than riding.

It was a very hot, airless day at the start, but as we crossed these paddocks it seemed as if the wind was rising, while, as I looked behind, I found I had distanced my companions completely; but this I rather enjoyed until I reached the Sandgate road and tried to rein up, when with a pretty toss of his small head, while his ears were laid almost flat on his neck, my steed rather increased his pace than otherwise, and then a horror came upon me—he had taken the bit between his teeth, and was off, past all control.

I looked back—the party were out of sight and the forest

before me, with only eight or nine miles between me and the cliffs. How the wind rose and whistled past my ears like a hurricane as we flew along, for I found out afterwards that my horse had been a racer; yet but for the thought of that abrupt termination and other obstacles which might lie between I had no cause for discomfiting thoughts, for he was going along as easily as if I had been sitting on a cushioned chair at home with a couple of punkah boys fanning me with all their might.

On, like John Gilpin, for my hat had gone by the board long before. I passed one or two pedestrians, whose shouts sounded something like advice to 'get inside and pull the blinds down,' but taunts like these were lost upon me at the time, perched as I was like a monkey on the back of this 'bolting' racehorse.

Then a good stretch of forest road opened up, and by lowering my head we passed safely under the spreading branches. Perhaps he will get tired after a bit, and before we come to the bay, I thought, and tried to glean some comfort from this as we rushed along.

Round a corner we spun like lightning, and then to my horror I saw directly in front a fallen gigantic gum tree, which a late storm had thrown down, barring the entire roadway. It was about half a mile distant, so that I had hardly time to loosen my feet from the stirrups before we were upon it. My horse gave one terrific leap upwards and cleared through between two great forks. I dropped the reins, and throwing up my arms caught hold of the upper fork, so saving my head and neck, and next instant was dangling, like Absalom, in the air about ten feet from the earth, while my horse, after running a few more paces with empty saddle, coolly stopped, and turning aside began to graze without the least appearance of excitement.

It was a narrow squeak. After I had dangled to and fro for a few moments, I let myself drop, and then went after my animal; and now the tantalisation of the affair began. He did not run away again, but calmly went on eating and allowed me almost to touch him, then, with a side look and a mocking curl of his lip, he cantered a few paces away and so on; I coaxed him and tried strong expressions, but all in

vain—he had come out for a day's fun, and this was his idea of horse-play.

At last, after wearing myself out completely, I sat down on a log and waited for my companions, while he hung about, and glanced at me inquiringly as much as to say, 'Why don't you catch me?' By-and-by they came in sight, and after laughing at my disordered appearance they caught him and brought him to his senses.

One of the party, a clergyman, changed horses with me for the rest of the journey, for, as he truly remarked, 'this horse was too much for me to manage.'

It was a disastrous change for him as a clergyman, for this ex-racer was one of the most disreputable beasts in the Colony—he could not pass a public-house door. Being a fine-looking animal he had been patronised chiefly by the demi-monde of Brisbane, who at this time were in the habit of showing themselves in the streets on horseback; therefore he had got into their ways, and so scandalised the minister utterly. But on the return journey, and as we got near Brisbane, his evil habits became more pronounced.

Whenever we reached a public-house bar that graceless steed would stop short, and all the spurring or whipping up was so much exertion thrown away.

'It's no good, sir,' observed the bar-keepers as they came each to their doors. 'I know the animal, and you must jist get off his back and come inside for a few moments, then after you mounts again he will carry you right along to the next pub.'

So the clergyman found out, to his humiliation, that he had to enter every bar-shop right through the city. But the grand climax was reached when the infamous horse brought his respectable rider right up to the verandah of one of the most notorious houses in Brisbane, and refused to move on to the bazaar until he got his accustomed lump of sugar and tender caress from the lily hands of his usual mistress. The position was public and awful in its completeness of degradation—a pillar of the Church sitting in front of this palace of pleasure, with one of the most celebrated priestesses hanging lovingly round his horse's neck, and the other giddy nymphs all laughing and chaffing his

Reverence from the verandah, at five o'clock in the afternoon!

I had another try at this same bazaar, and fixed upon what looked like a solid bit of horseflesh. His peculiarity was to subside into an awkward, shambling trot at the wrong moment, or stop dead with an Oriental salaam, as if to an unseen angel on the way. The day I took him out of the stable he broke into an easy canter right off, and carried me until within fifty yards of the window of my charmer in that gallant style. There the body-racking canter began, which made my teeth meet and rattle like castanets, my hat dance wildly, and the legs of my trousers work up to my knees. Thus she sighted me coming along, with a vision of bare calf (none too well developed in those days), and a pair of rumpled white socks tumbling over my elastic-sided boots. It was maddening, but mild compared to what followed; for as she looked out, startled at the shivering apparition, my horse saw his unseen angel friend, and made his profound salaam, landing me over his neck upon the gutter. As I rose and led him away, I heard a silvery laugh, which completed my ruin, from that open window. I never looked upon my love again.

With vengeance in my heart I mounted this demon blighter of hearts, and galloped off to the forest. Wildly I made him go, for I resolved to take it out of him. And now he developed another faculty, which was to take all sorts of sharp corners without considering his rider's head or legs, round tree-trunks and past hut-ends, just allowing the eighth of an inch between his flanks and the object he was passing.

While daylight lasted I managed to evade death a dozen times by lifting my legs or ducking my head at the right moment. Once, when we were flying past a low hut-roof made of sheet-iron I made the duck, and emerged with two inches of my felt-hat. The top had been shaven off as neatly as if with a razor; one half-inch lower and I would have been scalped.

Night came on dark as pitch, and I turned to ride back home, giving my horse the reins as he knew the way best.

We were just getting round a corner when I felt a sharp pain in the right knee, and heard a wild shout behind me. I had rushed past a bullock dray, the broad wheel of which had struck me in the knee, knocking the knee-cap right up. With my left leg I dug the spur savagely into the selfish ribs, and rushed on through the blackness, my right leg hanging helplessly out of the stirrup, until I reached Brisbane and the first doctor's shop, where I got my knee-cap set at once, afterwards getting home and to bed, where I lay for three weeks. When I think of those merry times I mourn that I cannot fix upon the locality of that bazaar.

The river at Brisbane twists and winds in a serpentine course through the city, with ferry-boats plying from shore to shore at stated streets, and a magnificent iron bridge called the Victoria, which connects Queen and Melbourne Streets at the North Quay. A very fine view of the city and river in its broad sheet, with all the many wharves and shipping, is to be had from Bowen Terrace. Altogether, if it is not quite the homely Brisbane that I knew in my young days, still it has advanced in beauty and stature as well as respectability, and has become a very imposing, prosperous, and charming southern capital of this as yet undivided colony.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MARYBOROUGH

Sugar Plantations and Kanakas—Black-birding—The *Young Dick*
—An Idea for the Planters—The Kanaka Melodies of the Future

BETWEEN Brisbane and Rockhampton lies a very fertile and interesting tract of country and coast.

A well-watered country. If at times the rivers run dry, there are always waterholes left behind, and when the people can come to understand how to keep the water by damming, &c., before it is all run away or absorbed (for during the rainy season the country is plentifully flooded),

they need never run short of a constant supply for all their wants or luxuries.

A fertile soil, this Queensland, and more so as we advance towards the tropics. There is not a single acre throughout Australia but can be turned to good account in the way of cultivation, as the land about Sydney, which was originally, without exception, the barrenest and sandiest portion of the continent, north or south, has proved. Therefore, if I point out spots, as yet unoccupied, on the route up to Cape York, I trust that I am addressing men who will understand me, and not foolish sentimentalists who expect to take possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, where no 'sweat of the brow' is required. Australia is in no portion a land where men may sit down and take their ease, any more than England is. All soils, even the richest, require working before they will produce, and virgin soil requires generally even greater patience and perseverance; but I will say to the man who comes out here to work and wait, his reward will be tenfold to anything he could get in England.

The Mary River is a splendid sheet of water which flows past the town of Maryborough, twenty-five miles up from its mouth, and 180 miles north of Brisbane, with at the entrance long sandbanks, and further in woody cliffs; then, as it narrows, flat banks of sugar-cane plantations, for this is the great plantation district of Australia, where black labour is required—a source of deep consideration to humanitarians, and a social problem difficult to solve.

Personally, from what I have seen of the black, or South Sea Island trade, I cannot discern much difference between it, as it is, and the negro-catching and slave-dealing of America long ago. The ways of trapping them are very little different; the transporting them to Queensland is similar; and the retaining of them as nearly alike as it could possibly be in reality, although, to read the laws concerning it, it is altogether a different and benevolent system. Let us look at it from the three points: the natives' view, the planters,' and the legal.

When I was a boy I once went for a trip through the Pacific Islands with a black trader. In those days the law

did not interfere very much, so that the traders did not require to resort to any subterfuges or tricks to evade it. All that they had to do was to lure or force the natives aboard, down with the hatches, up with the sails, and hurry back with their cargo to the market, without much query as to how they procured it. Now there are forms and ceremonies to be gone through which cripple their industry a good deal, and render the trade a trifle risky excepting to 'cute' old hands.

In the days I speak about they had not much bother. The trader made friends with the chiefs, who, in exchange for some presents, gave him all their unwounded prisoners of war, and what young men of the tribe they could spare.

The captives went willingly, because if they dared to disobey orders their islands would have been too hot for them. As for the prisoners of war, it was Hobson's choice, slavery or torture; they nearly always preferred slavery, as I fancy most of us would also under the circumstances.

The laws of Queensland demanded that a native should come, first, freely, of his own knowledge and will; secondly, that he was only hired for a space of three years, and sent home again when his time was up. Officers were appointed to see these laws enforced.

These officers, as a rule, did not understand the languages of the natives; therefore interpreters had to be chosen. The traders generally acted as interpreters.

This is how the ceremony was conducted and the articles signed:—

Officer. 'Those who have come of their free will hold up their hands.'

Interpreter. 'Hold up all your hands.'

All hands went up promptly. They had endured a voyage with the interpreter, and knew, from experience, better than to resist.

Down went the report, 'all right.'

Officer. 'You are willing to serve your time of three years? If so, up with your hands.'

Interpreter. 'Hold up your hands.'

Again the report was satisfactory, and the officer went

his own way, leaving the planters to come forward and pick out their men, paying their 20*l.* a-piece for them to the trader-interpreter.

The Government officials visited the plantations once a year, in order to see that none of the natives were kept longer than their three years. As a rule, few were kept, because before the end of their three years of servitude, what with the unaccustomed life, the cane swamps, and the home-sickness, few of the South Sea Islanders were worth anything any longer in the shape of work. Rheumatics and consumption had finished them up, so that the planters were glad to get rid of them, and send them home to die. (From this I am inclined to lean towards the side of the Carolina planters, who at least kept their slaves to the last and buried them; but that is a matter of private opinion entirely.)

Still, if some hardy islander managed to rub through without much damage, in his case there was no release.

Before the arrival of the officer the comedy was all prepared, and the sickly ones coached up as to what they were to do.

Officer. 'Hold up hands those who have served their time.'

Interpreter (the planter's overseer this time). 'You fellows to the left hold up your hands.' And the row of diseased skeleton-hands went up, while the cough-racked shadows prepared to see their native land.

As for the healthy slaves, how were they to know that this Government man represented a friend? They were not permitted to learn the English language.

Now each trader must carry a supercargo, appointed by Government, who goes with them through the islands to see that no force is used, and no bloodshed or violence takes place. Some of these men act conscientiously, yet the temptation to act otherwise is very strong. During a long voyage the captain and mates are apt to become chums of the supercargo. It is a miserable life for him if they are enemies on board. It is also to their interest to keep him well primed with drink, and lay little traps for him, so that if he is not very careful and has not great self-

control, long before they begin 'black-birding' he is completely in their power, and must shut his eyes whether he feels inclined or not.

There are war-sloops always trading about the Pacific Ocean to look after the natives and the traders, but there is little or no trouble with them. Any novice at the game can hoodwink these gentry and get their assistance.

Perhaps in an island fight a white sailor has been wounded or killed, no one need know how many of the natives fell first. The trader makes his report to the naval captain, and points out the island *where he has been murderously attacked*. Away sails the war-sloop to that island, bombards it straight off, demolishes the villages and gardens with shells, and leaves the horror-stricken survivors on a desolate island to starve to death, their cocoanut trees being their only means of living. Oh, it is a noble occupation for the brave British tars!

There is no use going into details of the foul atrocities which sometimes take place on those fair, sunny islands: the cold-blooded murders and shooting down, the ravishments and violence. Sufficient to say that the women of many of these tribes are perfect in face and figure and dazzlingly beautiful; that the men who hunt them have been months at sea, lawless, most of them, by their occupation, and made up from all nationalities. The reader does not require much fancy in his composition to imagine the rest. Enough that I have been a voyage in a black trader, and could not forget it in a lifetime.

In the hotel where I put up at Maryborough the captain, supercargo, and officers of the *Young Dick* were staying. The sloop itself was lying at anchor in the river, and I sketched it from the verandah—a clean-built, swift-sailing vessel, the ideal of what in my school-boy days I used to read about as pirate craft. They were *washing* it down, and getting it ready for another voyage.

It had come in a short time before, deluged with blood, and filled with wounded men. There had been a rising of the *cargo* on board, much blood spilt, and many lives lost (this was in 1886), and they were now filling it up with the consumptive exiles whose 'time was up.'

The captain, supercargo, and mates were all young, gentlemanly, genial fellows ashore. They gave me the information I wanted during the days we spent together, before I left for Rockhampton, and urged me very strongly to come along with them, offering me a free trip round the Solomon Islands, so that I might be able to see the great difference between 'black-birding' now and what it had been on my last trip over the islands. I did for a moment feel tempted to accompany them, but that New Guinea voyage to which I had pledged myself prevented me; I could not undertake both, so, like Mary, I chose the wiser way.

I spent with them my last night, for I was interested in the young men in spite of their trade—they were all so mild, generous, and lovable with each other and me; so after a farewell toast to our different successes, we parted, I for New Guinea and they for the Solomons.

That was the last voyage of the *Young Dick*; nothing has been heard of her or her crew since.

The Government has benevolently put up a hospital for consumptive natives a little way out of Maryborough. While I was there it was filled up, so they had to use outhouses for their crouching patients; so much for the healthiness of the sugar-growing business. I also went among the natives in the fields, watching them cutting down the cane (marvellously dexterous they were at it), and afterwards crushing it; I don't think that I saw one contented face amongst them, although South Sea Islanders have always a rather sad expression, but these Kanaka savages seemed to have added a lowering air to the usual melancholy, as if they were brooding on real or imaginary wrongs. Therefore I came to the conclusion that they were not enamoured of plantation life. One cause might have been that very few of them are permitted to bring wives with them. The traders and planters will not be bothered with encumbrances in the form of wives or children for the three years' spell, therefore, unless the natives learn to drink, they have no means of enjoying themselves, but go sullenly to work, and lie fretting for the absent ones at night. I never heard a sound of music or song in any of the huts; silence reigned over the whole of them.

As for the planters' side of this question, they grumble dreadfully about all the hard stipulations of the law with regard to their Kanaka workers; they must feed them too well, the work hours are ridiculously short, they dare not whip them if they are contumacious (as they mostly are); in fact, according to the planters the natives are the masters and they are the slaves. Perhaps so.

With respect to the Law;—well, I think that the Government are doing all that they can under this awful three years' single system; it is the system which is wrong both to masters and men.

I have thought over the matter carefully, for I like to take all sides of a problem and worry over it till I have got it right, and I come to these conclusions:—

Firstly, that for sugar-growing black labour must be employed, for no white man could stand the swamps for six months far less three years; *ergo* we must have Kanaka labour.

Secondly, that the South Sea Islander, under the despotic control of his chief or king, cannot be very much worse off even if he enters slavery; but according to the glorious British constitution we must not make slaves.

Then the only thing to be done is to treat the South Sea Islander as the Government treat the poor of England: make emigrants of them, send agents to invite them over with their wives and children, give them assisted passages, so treating them like men instead of cattle, and let them settle down, say at Maryborough or Cairns, with their families, and form townships for themselves. Thus they will become acclimatised, work contentedly for their wages, and send over for their relations, while the sugar plantations will flourish all over the tropical colonies, with the maize, rice, and coffee fields; and instead of silent huts where heaving groans and sighs are sent up nightly, there will be dancing and singing and courting on the moonlight nights, with the nursing and squealing of Kanaka children in the huts; there will be melodies composed to the plantations of Maryborough—Kanaka, instead of nigger songs and breakdowns—and the Colony will begin to thrive. Give him his women and his children, with an interest

in the country, and the South Sea savage will become one of the main supporters of Upper Queensland.

Maryborough is a well planned out town, and the centre of such rich outlying places as the Gympie gold fields, the Mount Perry copper mines, and Burrum coal field, besides its own agricultural produce, so that it is bound to be great, once these black traders are transformed into emigrant vessels and agents.

CHAPTER XXXV

ROCKHAMPTON

Some Shady Passengers—The Lion Comique and Lionesses—Burnett Heads—Keppel Bay and the Fitzroy River—A Night at Rockhampton—The Fasting Insect—Rockhampton as It Is and as It Ought to Be.

WE had rather a rough lot of fellow-passengers going up from Maryborough to Burnett River Heads—sharpers and turfmen principally, with a fair sprinkling of thieves. They were going to the races at Bundaburg. I was amused at the scant courtesy of the captain towards these gentry, and the meekness with which, as a rule, they received his open scorn and broad sarcastic remarks.

‘You had better leave your purses and watches with the steward, gentlemen,’ he observed openly in the saloon to the respectable portion of his company, while he looked with wrathful eyes over the shady lot. ‘Until we get past Burnett Heads at all events.’

‘Ain’t ye going to take us up the river, captin’? asked one of the scorned ones, mildly.

‘No, sir. I’ll pitch ye ashore as soon as I can do it,’ answered the captain, sternly.

‘But, captin’, we’ve paid our fare up to Bundaburg,’ remonstrated the others in a plaintive chorus.

‘You may have paid your passage as far as H——I for all I care! You pad the hoof at Burnett Heads.’

‘How, then, are we to get up?’

‘You can walk it, or swim it if you like, it’s only ten miles.’

'But our ladies?'

'Oh, they're used to roughing it, or ought to be by this time if they ain't?'

The captain is a king on his own deck and absolute, so that last scoff finished the discussion.

We had a lion comique also going up to Bundaburg—a fat, large, gloomy, heavy-jowled, moustached individual, who growled and thundered hoarsely (but in a low tone) about the injustice of having to 'pad the hoof' to Bundaburg; but when the captain looked full towards him and requested him to speak out like a man, if he made any pretensions to being of that persuasion, he became very quiet, and buried his triple chin in his flashy waistcoat. On the boards of a music-hall he might have been a great lion and 'comique'; on board this steamer he was a veritable lamb, and moody in the extreme.

He and his lady companions—for he had three with him, all fair-complexioned and golden-tressed—seemed, however, to be on good and familiar terms with the turfites, and condoled with each other on the blank injustice of the whole affair (when the captain was out of hearing), and what they intended to do, with the aid of the law, when they got ashore.

I used to lounge about the deck at night, and listen to their chaste conversation and mutual confidences regarding business, which I discovered from their complaints had been very dull—with the turfites, owing to those darned police getting to know them so well and nipping trade in the bud; with the lion and lionesses, through an infernal travelling opera company getting one stage ahead, and taking all the spare cash out of the townsmen's pockets before they came.

'I tell ye what it is. These cussed foreign hoperas is playing the devil with legitimate business,' growled the lion from his corner, savagely. 'We'll starve, that's what it'll come to if we can't get ahead on them.'

'Why don't you hurry up and make the spring, then?' observed one of the flash fraternity. And the moody lord of beasts muttered, 'I am thinking about it.'

I have often wondered where the legitimate began and the illegitimate ended in the theatrical profession. It seems all so curiously blended and mixed up.

One of the tawny-haired lionesses attempted to make up to the remorseless skipper, but without any marked success. He was too well-salted a bird already to be caught by powder and hair-dye. She tried a mild attack of sea-sickness on him the first hour or two, with drooping head and tottering feet, but he coolly let her droop and totter, unmanly ruffian that he was. Then she appealed to him for protection and justice. She had been robbed of her purse she told him ; but even that failed to interest him, for he told her coarsely that crows didn't pick out crows' eyes, or if they did no one had any right to interfere. Then she gave him up, used an unladylike expression about his habits, and returned to her moody mate, the lion comique.

So we progressed past Bingham and Wiangan, and saw our friends go off like a cargo of sheep—or rather blaspheming castaways—in two of the small boats, towards Burnett Head lighthouse, with the sun setting beyond them, making them look like black blots upon a golden shield. Welshers and lion comiques are not held in very great favour amongst the simple-minded Queenslanders.

So we come on to Keppel Bay, outside of which the great barrier reef of coral begins, which stretches right up to Cape York, and makes the rest of the voyage pass as if through a lake.

In front of us lies the Golden shore—a beautiful sandy beach—and over to the side the mainland, with the distant ranges, the chief mountain of which is Larcom (2,060 feet high), with a curious formation of rock on its summit, looking at this distance like the ruins of a great castle, with Cape Capricorn, Herbert Point, and Peak Island rising from the azure ocean.

It is a lovely sight as we look round. I find a note here in my book about the habits of seals, but whether it was some sealer on board who told me the facts at this point, or it had any connection with Keppel Bay, I cannot now remember. My note merely says: 'Habits of seals—Old bulls come on shore to fight over their cows, while the curlews fly about and keep watch, warning them of danger when it approaches.'

Rockhampton lies on the Fitzroy River, 35 miles from
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its mouth and 420 miles north-west of Brisbane. To me it has in it the makings of the most perfect city throughout Australia, for its surroundings are perfect as far as Nature can make her work when she wishes to adapt it to the wants and comforts of man. It now only rests with the owners to complete the task.

As we enter the wide mouth of the river I notice its muddy colour as the fertilising soil is washed down to the blue sea; then, as we steam up, the rich banks with picturesque backgrounds of ranges.

I learn from my handbook that it is in the county of Livingstone, and owes its origin to the Port Curtis gold rush in 1858, so that it is in its thirty-second year. I remember years ago some friends of mine joining an after-rush and returning to Brisbane in about a couple of months starving, penniless, and in outrageous tatters. When the first shipload of emigrants was landed on these shores, the captain had to sail away, as from an enemy, under the fire of his late passengers, who went nearly mad with horror at being left behind in such a desolate place. My Rockhampton landlord was one of these early pioneers, and was at the time as frantic as any of them, for the shores were all covered with unwholesome mangrove swamps, but he has lived to rejoice that the captain did not listen to their curses and violence. 'We had hard lines at first,' he told me, 'but we got over all that, and here we are, and now I wouldn't change for any other country on earth.'

There is a saying about Rockhampton that the climate is so hot that the bad people who die there and go below are compelled to send up to earth for their blankets to keep them warm. While I was there this last time, I felt it so chilly that I had to order a fire in the sitting-room before I could work, but I believe this was quite exceptional weather for Rockhampton.

The first night I spent there was a night of sleepless anguish of body and spirit. In spite of the cold, the mosquitoes came out in their thousands and contested the field with other enemies of sleep. I have read of those plagues of London—bugs, but never did I imagine that they could be so prolific and daring. They crowded upon me from all

quarters, and sucked my veins almost dry, while outside the net curtains the winged fiends dashed themselves madly and sang their song of battle, as I, the victim, writhed and moaned beneath the torture.

Next morning I rose at daybreak, languid and covered with wounds, and wandered along the banks of the Fitzroy, looking on the ships which lay at anchor softly veiled in silver mist, with wearied and hopeless eyes. Yes, I had to admit that the scene was beautiful; but what of that to a victim of the vampires and insomnia? I had, alas! ten days before me to endure this living death and nightly torture. Had I been only thin or delicate, perhaps happy release would come before the ten days were up; but I was robust and sound as a bell the night before, therefore I supposed I would last the time.

I determined to make an effort for life, so as soon as the other hotels were open I went over them one by one, to see if I could better my condition; but there the traces of my deadly enemies were flaunting on every seam of the weatherboard, darker and more ostentatious than in the lodgings I had left. I gave up the struggle, and meekly returned to my breakfast.

'Take me where you best like,' I muttered, as I lay down that night and recklessly opened up the curtains, for I was resolved that the airy rivals should have a fair chance—if I was to be drained, at least I would make it a competitive game with the usurpers; then I went to sleep, and wonderful to relate next morning felt a little stronger. I am of opinion that the mosquitoes had waged war on the bugs and sucked them instead of me; after that partial triumph I felt no more, and managed to enjoy Rockhampton life.

Every place has its own afflictions, so I do not tell this experience to disparage this city, because no one could have been more hospitably treated than I was here. They could no more keep down the breed than Victoria can exterminate the rabbits, or Melbourne its plague of rats since they had underground drainage. I passed one night in a haunted room here, when I thought that an enemy was bombarding the city, the shrieking, thumping, and rushing about was so unceasing and awful.

It was the night before one of the champion fights, and the waiters were all full of it next morning when I got up. The battle had come off at daybreak, so it was all over when I turned out.

'Have you heard the result, sir?' said the waiter, as he opened the door for me to go out.

'The result of what?'

'The great fight.'

'No. So there has been a fight after all, has there?' I inquired, thinking of the experience of the night I had gone through.

'Of course, sir. Slavin's won, as we all said he would.'

'I am glad of that, but it was a devil of a row they made over it.'

'How do you know, sir?'

'Because I couldn't get a wink of sleep all night through them; heard them at it banging about and cursing like wild cats!'

The waiter looked me over solemnly for a moment, and then said gravely, 'No, sir, I bet you what you like you couldn't hear that fight, for it took place four miles from here.'

'Then what did I hear in that room?'

'Must have been the rats, they're awful in that No. 46. I had slept in the haunted 46.'

No, I will never blame my kind host and hostess, or their amiable daughter, for my affliction, for no mortal man or woman could keep them down; but I join with them and the squatters of Victoria in anathematising the two foolish Noahs who introduced the first pair of rabbits into Camperdown district and the first male and lady 'bird' to Rockhampton. The genial climate did all the rest.

I preserved a few of these natural specimens, and posted them home to England to some friends. One of them was sent to a newspaper, and reproduced under the title of a Rockhampton 'soldier ant,' which when I read it afterwards I didn't correct, for it didn't seem a bad title for these bold warriors.

But what was stranger than all, amongst the specimens that I sent home was a strange insect which I put into

my letter alive; it had no food, yet went safely through the six weeks' journey inside the mail-bags, and when the letter was opened this insect hopped out on to the table all alive and active, and spreading a pair of new-fledged wings, prepared to use them, when his doom came upon him in the form of a tame starling who chanced to be moulting at the time. Dicky, the starling, made a pounce on the strange foreigner before he could quite recover his presence of mind and gobbled him up.

I never could tell what family that Queensland insect belonged to, but it must have been not only a good-living family but also very good as a medicine, for the tame starling who had been very sickly before this and moping, straightway brightened up and mended every hour afterwards.

In my lodgings I found some of the members of the 'cussed hopera company' who had defrauded the lion comique, and was greatly struck with the homely simplicity of these heroes and heroines; in fact, they gave themselves no airs at all, which astonished me very much. The soprano singer I found very fond of painting; she occupied her spare time painting on velvet, and her art-work was good and true. I enjoyed one night listening to their public performance, and I do not think I have heard better singing anywhere. Poor lion comique, the natives of Queensland were too close to Nature to appreciate your humour! It is only the Old-World masters who can understand such fine flashes of wit as the 'waggle of a bustle' or the genius of a music-hall beast's wild roaring. I am afraid that true music will starve out your *legitimate* line of business before you can get back to the refinements of civilisation.

'Ria's *not* on the job' much in Queensland, but good music and honest manliness are.

Rockhampton is the port of Central Queensland, and ought to be the capital of that colony when the country is properly divided off, as it is the outlet of the Dawson, Peak Downs, and Springton districts, all those rich lands watered by the Barcoo, Diamantina, Herbert, Thompson, Alice, and the numerous other rivers flowing from the interior. The streets are splendidly planned out for a semi-tropical city. They have a width of 132 feet, and are lined on both sides

with young trees. The town is supplied with water drawn from the Crescent Lagoon, two miles distant, and pumped into an artificial reservoir at the top of Athelstane Range, 150 feet high.

As the original settlers have planned out their city nothing could be better; but as they have built it so far, I fancy that I can add a word or two by way of suggestion.

I wrote a letter to the papers while I was there, describing how I thought it should be built; many of the local readers may have fancied that I was indulging in an ideal picture which could not be realised, or perhaps perpetrating a gentle joke. I was not. Indeed, I never have been more in earnest in my life, and I am always in dead earnest in all my artistic schemes. I don't now remember what I then wrote, but I perfectly recollect the ideal and designs which moved me at the time.

I had gone up to sketch the town from the top of the hill-road leading to the Murray Lagoon and Botanical Gardens. Before me spread the city, like the site of a great city in the plains, with the broad streets and squares only as yet partly filled in with houses, yet all pegged off as it will be in the 'sweet by-and-by.' Beyond the farther line of houses down by the wharves rolled the wide river, with its white-pillared suspension bridge, and with the masts and tracery of the ships lying moored; and behind these again the bold outlines of the rugged Berserker Ranges lying only a few miles distant from the town, with the gorges and cliffs and wooded prominences showing out in most picturesque relief.

The sun was setting behind me, and flung its warm radiance upon the house-ends and the outstanding portions of those perfectly formed mountains (almost a facsimile of the Ochils at Alva in Scotland), while purple shadows trailed along the plains and buried those valleys behind in velvet folds of deepness.

It was all very beautiful, and I gave a big sigh that I must leave it so soon.

People have often asked me which portion of Australia I liked the best, and I can hardly say. When I was in

Victoria I think I would have fixed on Birregurra as a home, but that was before I visited Gippsland and the Alps; when I was in New South Wales I thought upon Orange, with a hankering after the harbour of Sydney; again I come up to Queensland and fall desperately in love with Rockhampton, and after what I have written about the nights in bed there you will admit that it must have been very exquisite to make me wish to stay on and endure all this and more, if more could have been endured, for the sake of my artistic sense.

I think, however, now that I have seen most of Australia, I would desire no greater boon from Fortune than to be permitted to pass the rest of my life wandering over it with my camp-stool, sketch-book, and plenty of foolscap, so that I might take it in detail bit by bit, and let the world and posterity know how passionately I love it: the heat, the light, its infinite variety, and those magnificent trees, the rugged gum. I feel like a lonely exile away from it, for it embodies all that is pleasant and free and youthful about me. Those nine letters, 'Australia,' must have eaten themselves in bold Roman type deep into my heart.

But to come back to Rockhampton. As I looked over that scantily-filled valley, I saw a future city rise over these mean-looking buildings, a city built to suit the climate and the locality, high stone walls, and solid square towers with open roofs, like the Moorish buildings of Spain—those massive houses which are built in a square, with the garden and fountains in the centre, and other gardens around, where the sensible Moors sought to make as much shadow as possible, and planned their principal lounging places on the roofs. Yes, that is how Rockhampton ought to be planned out to suit its surroundings—gardens, streets, with lofty walls on either side of the trees, where people could always walk in the cool shade, and which gather all the breezes there may be about, and drift them down the alleys.

I saw it all in that sunset glow, as I hope the owners of the land will yet see it, when it has become the capital of the Colony, Central Queensland, with its white-walled Parliament House filling out the centre and raising on high

its rounded domes, with its squares and boulevards and glinting fountains, backed by those bold Berserker Ranges—saw it so plainly that I have made a sketch of it, to help in the future building of it.

CHAPTER XXXVI

MOUNT MORGAN

The Queensland Throne of Greasy Mammon the Great.

WE are now in the portion of Queensland where the earth is filled with treasures for those who may not be content with its bounteous surface—gold, silver, copper, and other metals. I have a box filled with precious stones with which a prospector presented me before I left the land, all from Central Queensland, and all in the rough: diamonds, rubies, opals, sapphires and other precious ware. They are dull pebbles of uncertain shape and varied low tones, for they require cutting to bring out their beauty; yet I prefer them as they are, because there may be flaws in them, which I cannot discern now, and I don't want to know their faults. Sufficient for me that experts have decided that they are what they were represented to be, real gems from Queensland.

All round Rockhampton the soil is good and productive; that we are getting into the tropics I know, because a man wanted to sell me a living young crocodile which he had caught a day or two before in the river above the Suspension Bridge.

But one of the most wonderful sights about this part is Mount Morgan, which is a mountain of gold.

In all other parts of the world men have to dig down for the precious metal, whether it is in alluvial or quartz form, but here they have only to shift the loose earth, or quarry out the ore in large quartz-block 'gold which is of unusual fineness and unprecedented purity.'

It is not often that a Scotsman misses his chance in life, if he gets one, people are apt to say: but this is what happened about this mountain of gold. A young Scotsman

called Donald Gordon had it all to himself, and let it all slip from him at the rate of 1*l.* per acre. It is reckoned to contain gold enough to yield a profit, after working expenses are paid, of nine millions sterling.

About twenty-six years ago Donald took up a squatting station here, and did very well for some years, until the Land Bill for selection was passed, and he was forced to give up the best portion of his run and purchase a selection, about the only one left on his station, being that where Mount Morgan stands—a selection composed chiefly of rubble, ferns, rocks, and tufts of coarse grass. After this the fortunes of Donald declined.

Then the prospectors came along, searching for traces of copper, and went over his land tapping at those loose dark metallic-looking boulders, without ever having a thought of what they contained, it being against all precedent for gold to be found like this. Then Donald took the mining fever, and thought he might find a copper mine, but not knowing anything of geology, he did what he considered the best thing to do under the circumstances, sent for a learned college-bred geological professor, paying all his expenses up, to get his infallible advice on the chances his selection had.

The professor came up with his instruments and scientific 'catchwords,' looked about him, and used regular jaw-breakers over the commonest objects lying about, but could not see any trace of copper or sign of anything else of value to poor Donald. He took him over the mountain, which the learned one on the anatomy of this little planet declared to be merely 'a mountain of ironstone,' and of no value.

That verdict finished poor Donald, who went off to work for his daily bread at Galawa Mine, Mount Wheeler, belonging to the three Brothers Morgan, all keen-headed men and experienced miners.

One day Gordon spoke about his ironstone mountain, and offered to show it to his employers, who, after going over it carefully, offered him 640*l.* for his selection of 640 acres. This he accepted gladly.

For a time the Brothers Morgan kept their find as dark

as possible, shipping all the gold to Brisbane for export so as to avoid suspicion; but such a Golconda could not be long hidden, so the brothers formed a limited company to work it, taking for themselves one-half of the mine, and disposing of the rest at the rate of 24,000*l.* for one-tenth interest. It is still kept as quiet as the shareholders can keep it, and as few men employed as possible upon it, which causes great dissatisfaction amongst the miners of Rockhampton, so that they are always trying to 'jump' claims upon it, and getting up all sorts of law quibbles about it.

To jump a claim means, according to mining laws, that if a man can only manage to peg round a claim before he is driven off the ground, it becomes his to work as long as he pays his miner's fee for the use of the ground, so that it is a game of surprise and rebuff. Mount Morgan has to be watched and guarded day and night by the owners, in order that no outsider may succeed in 'jumping' it.

In the Rockhampton weekly *Capricornian* of March 22, 1884, there is an interesting account of this wonderful 'mine,' if we can call it by such a name. I quote from this and other sources in my present description.

Mount Morgan lies 23 miles from Rockhampton in a south-westerly direction, and rises 1,225 feet above the level of the sea, and 521 feet above the batteries at its base. The prevailing colour of the rocks is the rusty red tint of ironstone, so that the poor college-bred professor had some grounds to fix his convictions upon, and therefore did not blunder nearly so much as most of his kind usually do when asked to put their scientific education into practice.

'For the first twelve miles after leaving Rockhampton a low, alluvial country is passed. Out of the clay rise isolated mounds and ridges of graywackes and shales hardened in portions into Lydian-stone and ribbon jasper. When the twelve miles are passed on the heads of Gracemere Creek, granite is seen in a gully—soft, decomposing, and covered with boulders of a coarse, ferruginous, siliceous grit.

'Five miles farther on is the Razor Back Range—a sharp "pinch" on the road, leading up to a table-land, which stands 900 feet above sea level. The rocks here are

metamorphosed strata, and this prevails until, five miles further on, Mount Morgan is reached.

'In the immediate neighbourhood of this mountain the rocks are mainly of bluish-grey quartzite—a fine-grained siliceous sandstone, now more or less vitrified, full of minute crystals of iron pyrites and specks of magnetic iron ore, graywackes of the ordinary type; hard, fine-grained sandstone, or mingled siliceous and felspathic materials, now somewhat indurated; and, lastly, occasional masses of shale hardened to a flinty consistency, and a few belts of serpentine.

'The central portion of the upper cutting (of the mountain itself) is a large mass of brown hæmatite ironstone, generally in great blocks of several tons weight, with a stalactite structure, as if the iron oxide had gradually filled up cavities left in the original deposit. The ironstone contains gold of extraordinary fineness, which can be detected in almost every fresh fracture. This ironstone is more or less mixed with fine siliceous granules. Gradually to right and left of the central mass the silica more or less replaces the ironstone. It is a frothy, spongy or cellular sinter, sometimes so light from the enlargement of air in its pores that it floats on water like pumice stone. Fine gold is disseminated throughout this deposit as well as in the ironstone.'

I quote from Robert L. Jack's, the Government Geologist's report here. He considers that nothing but a thermal spring in the open air, similar to the Iceland and New Zealand geysers, could have deposited the material above described; and that the deposits of the mountain are newer than the stratified rocks through which it has burst, as all across the surrounding Dee Valley are horizontally-bedded sandstone cliffs stretching north and south; so that it is conclusive that the valley has been carved out of a once continuous cake of horizontal sandstone, while the hot spring of Mount Morgan was newer than the desert sandstone.

'In active geysers that are accessible to observation, we find a narrow pipe or fissure terminating upwards in a crater-like cup or basin. It may be taken for granted that

Mount Morgan geyser was no exception to the rule, and that the upper portion of the mount, where ironstone predominates, represents a basin occasionally filled with a fluid of silica, iron, alumina, manganese, and gold held in solution, to be deposited when the bulk of the water from time to time withdrew into the subterraneous reservoirs with which the pipe communicates.

‘This Mount Morgan discovery of gold is one of the most important events in the history of mining industry. It is not merely that the quantity is large, but the possibility that this discovery may lead to others of equal importance in a direction where gold has never been looked for, lends it a wider significance. A vast area in our Western interior is covered with cretaceous rocks, and has been covered with the desert sandstone, of which isolated table-lands remain to attest its former extension. Beneath the cretaceous rocks, palæozoic rocks undoubtedly extend, and these doubtless contain many reefs as rich in gold as those which lie exposed to view in the ranges near the coast. Given a hot spring rising from depths in which auriferous reefs lie hidden, we may look for a repetition of the phenomena of Mount Morgan. My own acquaintance with the West has been limited, but I have long suspected that the opals and ironstones met with in certain Western localities have something to do with hot springs. I have heard tales of craters among the desert sandstone and cretaceous regions of the West, and in some instances I suspect that my informants may have been describing geyser-deposits. A few hot springs exist in Queensland, and several cases of “mud-puffs” have been noted; but there is every reason to believe that the remains of extinct springs—dating, like Mount Morgan, from tertiary times—may be widely distributed. I do not mean that the search for hot springs should be confined to the Western Down. My object is to point out that gold may yet be found over that enormous area where it has, hitherto, been regarded as hopelessly buried beneath mesozoic and tertiary accumulations.’

Dr. Lerbins, in a lecture, says: ‘As the mine (or quarry) is being developed caves are opened out, from the roofs of which oxide of iron and silica hang like stalactites

the size of a finger, in which gold is readily seen disseminated. The whole hill-top seems to be of richly auriferous stone. It is merely cut away to suit the convenience of the miners, so that a quarry or broad terrace has been formed. The cutting is 20 feet high by about 100 feet long, and the stone is of the same character the whole



A QUEENSLAND ABORIGINAL

distance, and extends to the summit of the mountain several chains higher. The facility with which the gold-bearing quartz can be obtained may be judged from the fact that a charge of blasting-powder, put in anywhere along the works, will displace tons of it at a time. It is carted after this about a quarter of a mile along a good,

metalled road down the mountain side, and is then thrown into a wooden shoot, wide and deep, and about 200 feet long, at the bottom of which a cutting has been made for its reception, and barriers raised to prevent it rolling farther down the hill. It is then again carted to battery No. 1, of ten stampers, and next to No. 2, of fifteen stampers, where about 250 tons are crushed per week. The return is said to be never less than 5 ozs. to the ton, and is valued at the rate of 4*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* per ounce, while the "tailings" left over are said to contain as much as is saved.'

From some samples of the quartz sent by Mr. Hall, one of the proprietors of the quarry, to the Sydney Mint, for testing purposes, by their special Chilian mill, it was found that Lot 1 gave gold at the rate of 39·32–100 ounces standard per ton of quartz, while gold at the rate of 46 ozs. 2 dwts. 12 grs. per ton was left in the tailings; and in Lot 2 the tailings assayed 44 ozs. 5 dwts. 18 grs. of gold per ton. The at found here is not in the original matrix of gold generally found, Nature having already mined it, chemically treated it, sublimated, and redeposited it.

Gold has been found all round Rockhampton; to the south at Calicpe and Raglan; south-west, Crocodile and Morgan; west, Native Bee, Stanwell, and Clermont; north-west, Morinish, Ridgeland, and Rosewood; north-north-west, Bonnie Doon and Marlborough; north, Cancoona; east, Mount Wheeler, Cawarral, and New Zealand Gully; south-east, Stony Creek—all highly gold-bearing reefs and rich alluvial deposits.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* gives a fine bit of word-painting of the scenery round this golden mount. I cannot resist taking some extracts from it before I leave the spot.

'The crest' (of Razor Back) 'reached, I look back and see teams of horses and the drays far below, the track beyond winding in and out among the trees till an abrupt turn shuts it out. On every side are round-topped hills covered with blue gums. They are like waves in a broken sea; those nearest dark and gloomy-looking, those beyond flecked with lines of light and spaces of shadow, those in the far distance tinted to the daintiest blue, and wrapped

in a tissue of silver gauze, the shimmer of the air quivering in the mid-day sun.

'Passing through a little canvas town with its store, a



couple of miles' ride brings me to the mine. The thud, thud of the stampers crushing the quartz, the tents, the great stacks of dark red stone, and the pits filled, and stream flowing, and dyed into the same hue, tell us of the work of the miner. The track dips into the dry bed of the river, which in the rainy season becomes a swift torrent, bearing along branches and trunks of fallen trees.'

He goes on to describe the dams, sluice-pits, into which the washed material is poured (want of water is the great drawback at present in Mount Morgan), the stampers, and the batteries, with the refining shed, where the 'tailings' are treated chemically, in order to extract the gold, which is so fine that much of it escapes the 'ripples' and 'blankets.'

The process of chlorination is kept secret, the works being managed by a professional metallurgist and chemist, employed by the shareholders, and paid according to results.

'In the galvanised-iron shed, one of the first objects noticed is a range of furnaces upon which are placed, one to each furnace, glazed earthenware jars containing chemicals necessary in generating chlorine gas. Next, a number of vats, where the tailings are poured, and the gas injected, which sets free the gold from the tailings. The liquid gold is then filtered through the finest Mediterranean sponges, and so passes from the bottom of the vats into a number of tanks at a lower level. The tanks being filled, sulphate of iron is then poured in, and the gold is precipitated to the bottom, and the chlorine set free. The precipitate is then treated in the crucible, and the gold secured.

'For some distance' (up the mountain) 'a road has been cut, where we meet a number of horses with drays filled with quartz. The prevailing colour is the dusky red of ironstone. The road is a great red scar, the drays are red, the horses red, and the men, as they guide the animals down the steep roadway, loom through a great cloud of red dust.

'The mine is unlike any other I ever saw. It is simply an immense quarry. With the hills of blue gums around it, this great scar, glowing with red, yellow, white, black,

and a whole pallet of colours, stands out like a jewel or a many-hued mosaic, in a dead, lustreless setting. It is difficult to convey even the faintest impression of what it resembles—it is so unlike all other geological formations. It is not a reef with defined walls, nor can any trace of distant strata be seen. There are great masses of what look like fused iron, or slag from a furnace. One has to look closely to see the gold, but, looking closely, one sees minute specks powdered over the rock. Sometimes these gold specks cluster together, and form tiny tree or fern-like figures.

‘About 250 feet below the first mine is No. 2, the southern claim, where a face of about 700 feet has been opened out, and here the stone differs from that of No. 1. There are great seams and patches of white stone that look like calcined quartz. This stuff is very light, like pumice stone. Standing at the face I put out one hand and filled it with a substance as fine as flour, and perfectly white, while with the other hand I broke off a piece of black, heavy rock.

‘In opening up this face small cavities are met with, from the roof of which depend stalactites. In some cases, on the floors of these cavities stalagmites are also found formed beneath the stalactites. At some places they meet; at others an open space is left between.

‘But what is very strange, in some of these cavities where there are none of these stalactites and the roof is smooth, the floor is covered with pinnacles exactly similar to the stalagmites, but bedded in as though they had been forced upwards and from it. In one cavity I saw a wondrously brilliant bit of colour. The lower half had been torn away, and only the upper left, and this was crusted with nodules, coloured with the richest metallic tints—crimson, violet, green, and other half-tones.

‘Returning from the mountain I stopped at a wayside inn, where a tall, weather-beaten, grizzled-looking man took my horse to a well to drink. This was the original holder of the freehold (Donald Gordon), who parted with it to the Morgans. He said that he had always believed the mountain to be of ironstone, and never dreamt of the

fortune which had been so long within his grasp, and which he had sold for 640*l*. In olden days he used to sell this pumice-stone-looking gold quartz in Rockhampton to clean the hearths and doorsteps of the houses.'

CHAPTER XXXVII

COAST SCENERY

Suburbs of Rockhampton—Olsen's Caves—Towards Townsville—
Whitsunday Passage—Bowen—Two Nice Young Passengers—A
Breakdown at Bowling Green—Cleveland Bay and Townsville.

BEFORE leaving Rockhampton I went for a drive, with two friends, to Olsen's Caves, along a fine bush road, with the warm tropical mists overlying the country (the mornings are mostly misty on the Fitzroy River, and bad for ague before people get acclimatised). What a fairylike picture the bush looked, with the great spider meshes, heavy with the moisture, trailing over all the branches and leaves!

We crossed the bridge and looked down the river, all pearly and soft, with the ships at anchor repeating themselves, and the wooden posts of the wharves with the terrace above, ships and lines drifting into tender spectres of objects, and delicate washes. One of my companions on this trip was the editor of a local paper, and the other a lover of, and exceptionally good painter of, pictures for a non-professional, so that we had tastes in common and enjoyed ourselves.

Up towards the weir the river was lined with trees and wooden huts all blanched with that soft atmospheric effect.

Past woodmen's shanties and Chinamen's huts, picturesque in the extreme as they stood glowing in all the tints of different coloured preserved meat and salmon and sardine tins which John had lined them with—gay structures, if a trifle uncertain in their upright lines and shaky on their pins.

I liked that bush drive in spite of the clusters of ferocious

tiger mosquitoes which went with us, hanging hungrily on to us, and perhaps if I had not dropped my favourite pipe down one of the holes, and broken the amber stem, or passed over without seeing the Fish River Caves, I would have been delighted with the glowing wonders of Olsen. As it was, my admiration became a little qualified. Still, they are something to be proud about in the way of caves, vast and lofty in some places, with a delightful soft carpet of bat droppings underfoot, and long roots of trees dropping like snakes from roof to floor; narrow passages where one has to squeeze hard to get through, and countless families of bats hanging head downwards from the ledges. We spent two or three hours boring mole-like through the earth, with unexplored caves on every side of us, and hollow chambers underfoot. Outside it is very rugged, with dense bush about it and charming, extensive views all round, with blue and scented gums making the foreground sweet, and clusters of the zamia, that half-way plant between the fern and the tropical palm, the pith of which is good for food on the tramp, and the outside for making eider-down couches.

Next day I went to Gracemere, a pretty suburb along the Crocodile Road. Next to Breakfast Creek, and round the Berserkers, getting some quaint sketches.

I did not get to Jericho as it was too far distant, but I heard all about it and its expectations, and the pretty bathing-places along the coast, and after seeing the meat-preserving works at Lakes Creek and the scalping-huts, I was ready to depart and say farewell to my friends the *ladybirds*. By the way, I completely disgusted them before I left by anointing myself nightly with oil of lavender, which is a very potent charm against midnight marauders.

That evening I went down the river, under a heavy shower, in the little 'Dolphin,' and joined the 'Alexandra' at Keppel Bay.

It was all summer weather after this, for we were now within the protection of the Barrier Reef, so that there was no longer danger of sea-sickness. We might look at the storm raging outside in the ocean, inside we were protected and safe. All I had to do was fix myself comfortably on deck and sketch the passing landscape, while the captain

lounded beside me, when off duty, giving me the names of places from his chart, and telling me incidents about each landmark as we passed. A very fine fellow was the captain of the 'Alexandra,' and his chief steward was also one of the most obliging and gentlemanly of waiters. If it had not been for the easy and elegant manner in which he waited at table, I should have quite felt to see such a man standing while I sat; as it was, he gave a dignity to the post, and stood like a genteel protest against the vulgarity of those he seemed to patronise by attending upon. I admired him prodigiously, not only for his kindness and affability, but also for his aristocratic appearance. He had a refined, pale face and classic features, with expressive eyes, a slender figure, and languid air, while his carefully-cultivated moustache might well have graced an *habitué* of the Army and Navy Club. From what I have heard, lady passengers liked to travel on board the 'Alexandra,' and I don't wonder at it—I should have doated on my soup if handed to me by such a drooping cavalier, had I been a susceptible young lady. May he live long to adorn that neat little saloon, and his shadow never grow less as it glides gracefully along the snow-white deck.

The sea is of that delicious cobalt-green tint, with violet streaks caused by the snow-white beds of coral over which we are sailing day after day, with softly clouded skies and warm breezes fanning our faces from the distant ocean. Every hour it is becoming warmer and more beautiful, with constant changes of coast, and islands dotting all round, some rugged and bare, some clustering with trees.

We pass the Clara Group and Steep Island on the one side, cliffs 409 feet high, covered with herbage, while on the other lies the mainland, soft greys, greens and purples, with snow-white clouds half veiling the distant ranges. It is still the black-fellow's country this mainland, for we see the smoke of their fires curling upwards on Edwards Islands, the Beverley group, Cape Townsend, &c. Then to Flat Top, near the entrance of the Pioneer River, and Port Mackay, a rising town and great sugar centre. Over twenty-five sugar mills are working here, the River Estate

mill being lighted by electric lamps; and although barely twenty years old, Port Mackay has over forty miles of streets, and a public library of nearly 2,000 volumes. We are once more in the land of free libraries.

Talking about libraries reminds me of the State schools of Australia, of which I have as yet said nothing. The whole country is fairly studded with schools, and must be one of the finest places in the world for teachers, and, as the education is free, also for pupils. All the schools are supported by Government, and where trains run past them the journey to and fro is free to scholars. I have seen the slow train stop every few yards, like a tramway car, to pick up or let down the children as they come from or go to school—a pleasant sight, even though it made slow travelling.

Captain Cook has given names to a great number of the islands and points along this coast, and fortunately they have not been altered, for they are all most expressive and descriptive.

We pass Temple Island, Cape Palmerston, Fresh Water Point and Round Top, Flat Top Island and Port Mackay, Slade Point and Shoal Point, and with Anchor Island, enter Whitsunday Passage, reckoned to be one of the most beautiful straits throughout Australia. A lovely place it is, with thickly-wooded and rounded hillsides and green banks, with cliffs starting boldly up at parts, and high ranges behind—Cape Conway, Dent Island, Pine Head, Cid and Molle Islands to right and left, as we steam close to them both, with the High Peak, 1,900 feet high, all wooded, and Mount Jeffreys on the mainland, Grassy Island, Double Cone, Armit, Gumbril, and George Point.

Cape Gloucester is one of the most diversified and rugged promontories we have come to yet, standing boldly, with its boulder terraces and grassy slopes, high amongst the sunlit clouds, and the smooth waters lapping its rocky strands.

We now approach Bowen, and a pretty picture it makes from the sea, as it lies behind Gloucester Island and lighthouse, brightly sparkling with its purple background of hills.

The people of Bowen do not hurry or excite themselves over trifles; there is no need, in this quiet, undisturbed cove. It is pastoral and sleepy in its character, for there has not yet come any great rush to disturb their repose. The situation is delightful, land-locked and safe from tempests; all they have to do is to live and let live, which they try to do.

Two young men come aboard at Bowen. One has been sheep-farming and become tired of Australia, and having got a little cheque from home, is returning to England, like a bad shilling, to loaf upon his relations. He has not a happy look about his weak face, and is an unpleasant object to look upon, so that I expect he will be one of those returned exiles who abuse the country when they get back.

The other is a pudding-faced boy who is being sent to England by his fond parents to be educated, under the stupid impression that he will come back more accomplished than the colonial schools could make him. It is his first parting from his mammy, and he is blubbering at the awful thought of the long voyage. Unfortunately for my peace of mind he fancies, as he mops his fishy eyes, that he sees a gleam of sympathy in mine, and straightway becomes one of the most awful afflictions any one could have thrust upon him, for he feels lonely and wants company, is chock-full of senseless questions, and never leaves me for a moment or ceases in his everlasting prattling, until I get away from him at Thursday Island. I vainly attempt to sit upon him. All rebuffs are thrown away, for he is too conscious of his own niceness to take the broadest hint to leave me alone for a moment. A great lubberly boy he is, who hangs over me while I am working; like a half-grown Newfoundland pup, only less interesting. When I think of him now, I wonder how I kept from knocking him on the head and tumbling him amongst the sharks during some of the many nights when I was trying to enjoy the lovely starlight, and he would maul about me, tempting me to murder. Sometimes, when desperate, I turned on him and curdled his marrow with stories of what they would do to him when he got to college; but that was a trivial revenge for all I had to suffer.

I think that either he or his shipmate must have been

our Jonah on board, for after we had got clear of Mother Buddock's Stone, Abbott's Point, and Cape Upstart, and were approaching Cape Cleveland, having behind us Bowling Green Lighthouse, the engines stopped suddenly, while a quick thud from below startled us on deck; our propeller had snapped through the middle, and the rest of our journey into Townsville had to be done by sailing at about the rate of two knots per hour.

I would not have minded this had I not been in a hurry to catch the 'Victory,' the only boat possible for a month to New Guinea. Knowing the day it was to sail, I reckoned upon just having one day to spare at Thursday Island. Now, unless some unforeseen accident favoured me, I would have to waste a month or six weeks, perhaps forego my Papuan trip altogether.

However, the captain kindly came to my rescue, and as a boat was to be sent into Townsville for a tug to help him in, he permitted me to go with the boat and gave me a letter to the captain of the British India mail steamer 'Duke of Westminster,' to take me on with him, and charge my fare to his company.

A splendid moonlight night that was, as we progressed towards Cleveland Bay, and a delightful experience going over these tropical waters, with the men straining at the oars.

Cleveland Bay, land-locked on three sides, with Magnetic Island at the entrance, is one of the finest roadsteads I have seen, and capable of sheltering all the ships at present afloat.

Townsville had, at the last census (1881), seventy-five miles of streets and roads, 1,450 buildings, and a population of 9,000. It is picturesquely laid out on the north bank of the Ross Creek and partly climbing up Castle Hill, which rises to a height of 1,000 feet from the sea. There is a large shipping trade done here, Townsville being the main outlet of an immense territory, several gold fields, and vast pastoral districts, including such flourishing places as Charters Towns, Hughenden, Norwood, Ravenswood, and the stations lying between it and the Diamantina River.

As a port of call, however, it has its disadvantages, for

large vessels have to lie over two miles from the shores, the water gradually shallowing up to the beautiful sandy beach. But for this drawback I would be inclined to fix upon this place as the future capital and the *third* colony of Queensland; as it is, however, we must look for the locality about 200 miles farther north.

Townsville is plentifully supplied with water, as the supply is drawn from two great wells sunk three and four miles distant, where they believe that they have tapped a great subterranean stream. The water from these wells is pumped up to a reservoir of 650,000 gallons capacity on Castle Hill, at about 180 feet above sea level, and from there distributed through the city.

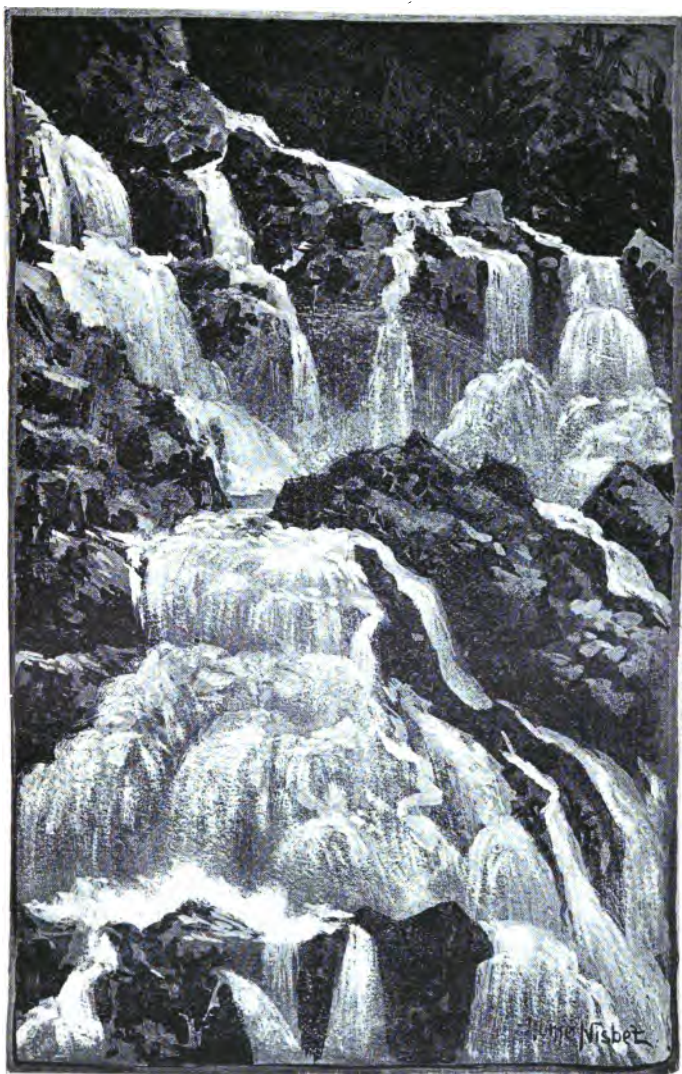
The approach to Townsville is very fine, and almost resembles the Bay of Naples, with, instead of Vesuvius, that abrupt Castle Hill towering over it, and the other ranges behind.

Barges and small ships lie scattered over the waters, with the houses glistening at the base of the mountain and along the yellow beach. On Magnetic Island they have built a quarantine station, and on a little rocky island in the entrance to the bay is placed a lighthouse to guide vessels in.

I was in time for the mail steamer; indeed, the other passengers were also, for as morning dawned over the bay the 'Alexandra' came dragging along behind a disreputable little tug, and my beautiful boy-bear smiled genially at me over the side, preparatory to coming aboard. I groaned in spirit as I saw those prominent teeth glisten in the morning sun.

As I was going along the saloon passage where the baths were, I heard my name shouted out, and, next moment, was seized upon by a party in a towel-wrapper. It was one of our old passengers from the 'Parramatta' going to China. This world is very small now, and I don't know the place where a man may safely hide his identity if he has been once on board a P. and O. or an Orient steamship. We were soon busy, recounting our adventures since we had parted company at Melbourne, until the breakfast bell rung.

After breakfast there was a little disturbance about the



THE BARRON FALLS



young man from Bowen who was going home to loaf on his friends, and his slobbery friend the future collegian came up to tell me all about it and ask my advice.

It appeared that the young man's friends had sent him out a second-class ticket, but on board the 'Westminster' they had no second class, so the captain had told him either to go ashore or accept the accommodation which they had. However, this did not suit the dignity of the youth, and he had sent his boy friend to see if he could not take the hat round and collect the difference for a saloon passage for him.

As the boy explained the charitable project, and ended up by coolly asking me if I'd take round the hat, my disgust broke out in rather strong expressions.

'So this young gentleman would sooner be an object of charity amongst the passengers than rough it a bit in the steerage, would he? Tell him from me to go ashore. He hasn't given Australia half a trial; he hasn't got a quarter of the "Lion and the Unicorn" kicked out of him yet.'

The boy delivered my message, and as the captain would not be any more charitable than I or the other passengers felt inclined to be, this poor young man was shunted ashore, weeping very pathetically over his own injuries and misfortunes, to finish his education of colonial life, as the Bowen boy was going home to commence his.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

HIGHER THAN NIAGARA

The Future Capital of Northern Queensland—Why the Town of Cairns should be Chosen—The Barron River and Falls—Mr. Monk's Idea, and Description by Mr. A. Meston.

CAIRNS is the place which I have been forced, by many advantages which it seems to possess over other northern townships, to think about as the most suitable site for a future capital of Upper Queensland.

It lies 900 miles north-west of Brisbane, 480 miles from Rockhampton, and so is about an equal distance between this city and Cape York, the topmost cape of Australia—just where it should be when an equal division takes place.

It is situated at the mouth of Trinity Inlet, on the western shores of Trinity Bay, with a very fine harbour, where vessels of all sizes can go alongside the wharves, once they get over the bar. This bar is the one, and only drawback, as at low tide there is only seven feet of water over it. It is of a width of about a mile from the fairway buoy, and an inlet would require to be cut this length for the convenience of vessels drawing over ten feet. But this is merely a trifle in the way of future expense.

Cairns lies on level ground, and is surrounded by miles of the finest sugar-lands in the entire Colony. Indeed, it has space enough about it for a city as large as London to be built in comfort upon the plains before the ranges can stop the extension, which is advantage No. 2 in its future aspirations.

The climate is most salubrious and healthy (if hot), and will be made more so when the ground is drained and cleared of its virgin scrub and mangrove fringes, a fine long sea beach extending in front of the present town. It is surrounded by gold-fields, tin and other mines. Herberton, with its tin mines, fifty-five miles distant, to which a good road has been made as well as a fairly good railway line, is one of the richest of mineral districts, not only for tin, but copper and silver lead, the lode and alluvial covering over a space of forty miles. I am understating the extent and wealth of this district, as I want to be well within the mark, but fresh lode discoveries are of constant occurrence. Indeed, it is so exceedingly rich in minerals that it can be compared only with Cornwall, and it will be able to give employment to 20,000 miners when the capital to work it is forthcoming.

Cardwell, the Tate River, and Port Douglas are all within easy distance of Cairns, both Cardwell and Port Douglas being centres of a great cedar and future wood trade, as behind these towns extend vast primeval forests.

of the finest wood in the world. So much is there hereabouts inland that the world may be supplied for the next century or two without danger of this magnificent timber land being cleared off. Hope No. 3.

Innumerable large and small rivers and creeks water this fertile land—rivers plentifully supplied from the Bellenden Ker Range, the highest peak of which towers 5,400 feet above the level of the sea, and which lies south of the town—while to the north rise the, as yet, unexplored highlands of Cape Tribulation and Peter Botte Ranges, the lofty peaks of which are nearly always covered with rain-clouds, and which make the most sublime scenery that can be imagined. So we find, first, space enough; second, splendid harbourage; third, mineral wealth which cannot be surpassed; fourth, fertility of soil; fifth, immense timber-land of the rarest quality of the valuable cedar; sixth, inexhaustible supplies of water; and lastly, healthiness of locality. What more can be desired by mortal man for a future capital to a splendid tropical country, where everything may be grown, dug out, or supplied for his wants and comforts!

About nine miles from Cairns, and in the Bellenden Ker Range, is one of the largest, if not *the* largest, waterfall in the world. It is some hundreds of feet higher than Niagara, and pours over the rocks a most tremendous and unceasing force of water, cold as ice, and pure as crystal, into the Barron River, which flows past Cairns into the sea.

Some miles above the Barron Falls the river flows in a broad, smooth sheet, widening out at this point like a great pond, and very deep, while beyond this again it runs along unobstructed, right into the heart of the cedar country for many miles, being fed by countless mountain streams, and rushing along, a full flood, through forests and deep gullies.

One of my fellow-passengers from Thursday Island to Cooktown was a Mr. Monk, a Government surveyor and resident of Cairns, who gave me a great deal of information about the Barron River and surrounding country. He also explained to me what I considered a very reasonable and practical mode of utilising this fine flow of water, now running, like Niagara, to waste.

Upon the banks of this smooth bend of the river above the falls he would plan a township, and wharves for woodrafts and vessels to transport the cedar logs from the forest as they were felled, and tin, copper, silver, and other produce from Herberton, close to which town the Barron River passes, and beyond which it is deep and wide enough to float vessels.

This pond or basin he would partially dam, so that logs, rafts, and vessels could get no farther down. He would direct a portion of the water into canals, for the purpose of lifting trains up the face of the rocks at the fall by water power and cables on a zig-zag line, similar to the Blue Mountain railway, and from there along the remaining few miles to Cairns, whereby the cargoes could be first floated down the river, afterwards taken by train to Cairns, and thence shipped to all quarters of the world direct. Cairns would be the seaport city, and this upland city a midsummer resort and commercial river-port and highway to the interior.

I cannot resist bringing in here a description of these stupendous falls, written by Mr. A. Meston to one of the Queensland papers, and which, I trust, the author will permit me to use as the text to my illustration. It will give the reader a fair idea how the grandeur of the Falls affects some spectators.

The Barron Falls in Flood Time.

‘My first description of these famous falls was written when the river was down to its lowest level. The present article describes the falls during the highest flood in the Barron for seven years. Byron says that no picture can give us an idea of the ocean; and no word-painting can give a clear outline of the unimaginable scene at the Barron Falls on the first three days of the present year. I find the blacks have two names for this tremendous cataract—“Biboohra” and “Kamerunga.” They appear to avoid the locality, as during visits extending over four years I have not seen a myall near the falls, nor the tracks of any on the gravel beds of the river. I am not yet on terms of

intimacy that would enable me to learn any legends they may have regarding the falls, but shall acquire that interesting information when my relations with the dark sons of the forest are less "strained" than they have been in the past. The actual height of the falls is now ascertained to be about 600 feet, or 436 feet higher than Niagara. From the edge of the precipice the river falls 900 feet in half a mile. The Herberton railway will pass right along the top, and the finest view of the whole falls will be seen from the carriage windows. That view, in flood time, will have no rival in the known world.

"Stand back," said the dying Raphael, as the first glories of the world of spirits appeared to the parting soul—"stand back until I sketch that heavenly scene!" And standing by the Barron Falls on the second day of the new year, I, too, felt disposed to say, Stand back until I sketch that mighty picture, hung there on the Primal rocks among the everlasting mountains, like an immortal replica by Raphaelistic Nature, from some divine original in the picture-gallery of God! Before me was a torrent of water 300 yards wide, and about sixty feet deep, rushing resistlessly along at the rate of twenty miles an hour, tumbling in a solid wall suddenly over the edge of the enormous precipice, launched clear out into space, and descending for over 600 feet into the "waste wide anarchy of chaos, dark and deep," yawning abysmal in the depths below. I look up the river, and see it come sweeping round the bend, divided into three streams that rush together like wild horses as they enter the straight in the dread finish of their last race. They come with the sound of a tempestuous ocean dashing its surges through dark passages in the caverned rocks. Weird fancy pictures them as the rivers that roll through the gloomy realms of Pluto. Imagination hears the sorrowful wail of Achero, the lamentation of sad Cocytus, and the hoarse roaring of infernal Phlegetho, "whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage." They roll over the cliff, strike the first ledge of rock, and the water is dashed into foam and mist; rolling billows of vapour are projected with terrific force, in vast fantastic forms, down the entrance of the Titanic avenue of the river

beneath, and clouds of spray float away upwards for 1,000 feet, and condense, and drip in showers of emerald dew-drops from the trees on the slopes of the mountains. The currents of air, created by the cataract, waved the branches of trees hundreds of feet overhead as if they were swaying in the contending winds of a storm.

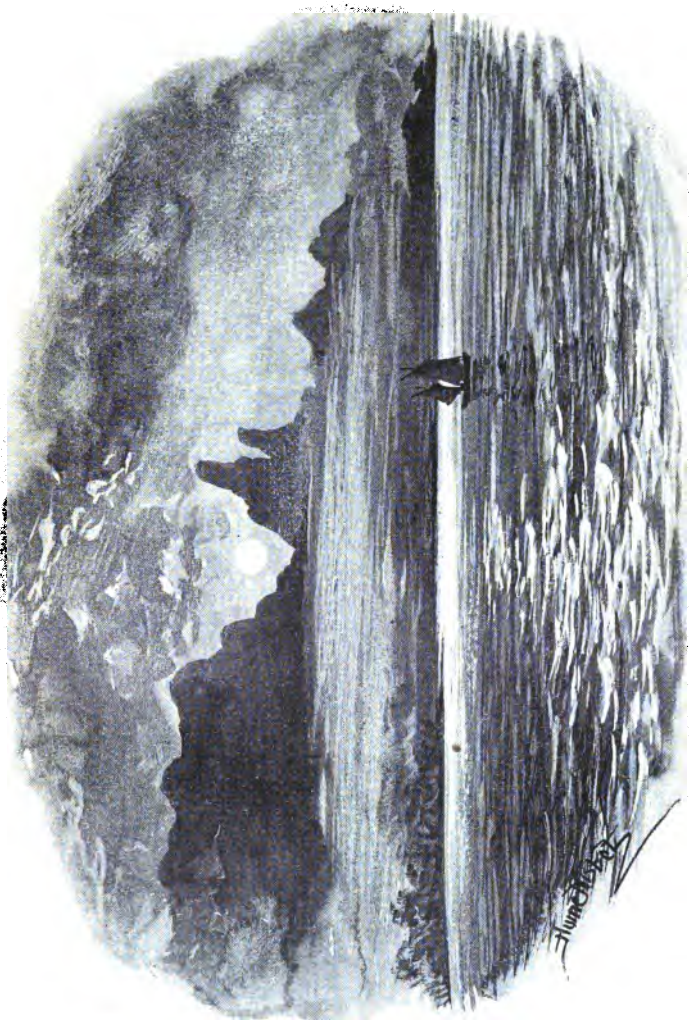
‘The thunder of the waters was awful. The rocks shook beneath you, like a mighty steamer trembling with the vibrations of the screw. The very soul within you recoils appalled before the inconceivable grandeur of that tremendous scene. These falls stand alone among cataracts, like Chimborazo among the mountains. Eternity itself is throned there on those dark rocks among the wild whirlwind of waters, and speaks to you in solemn tones of the Past, the Present, and the Evermore. You stand voiceless, “mute, motionless, aghast,” in that immortal Presence.

‘The human tongue has no utterance for the thoughts within you. They are not dead, those black rocks, those vast columns of descending waters! They tell you of

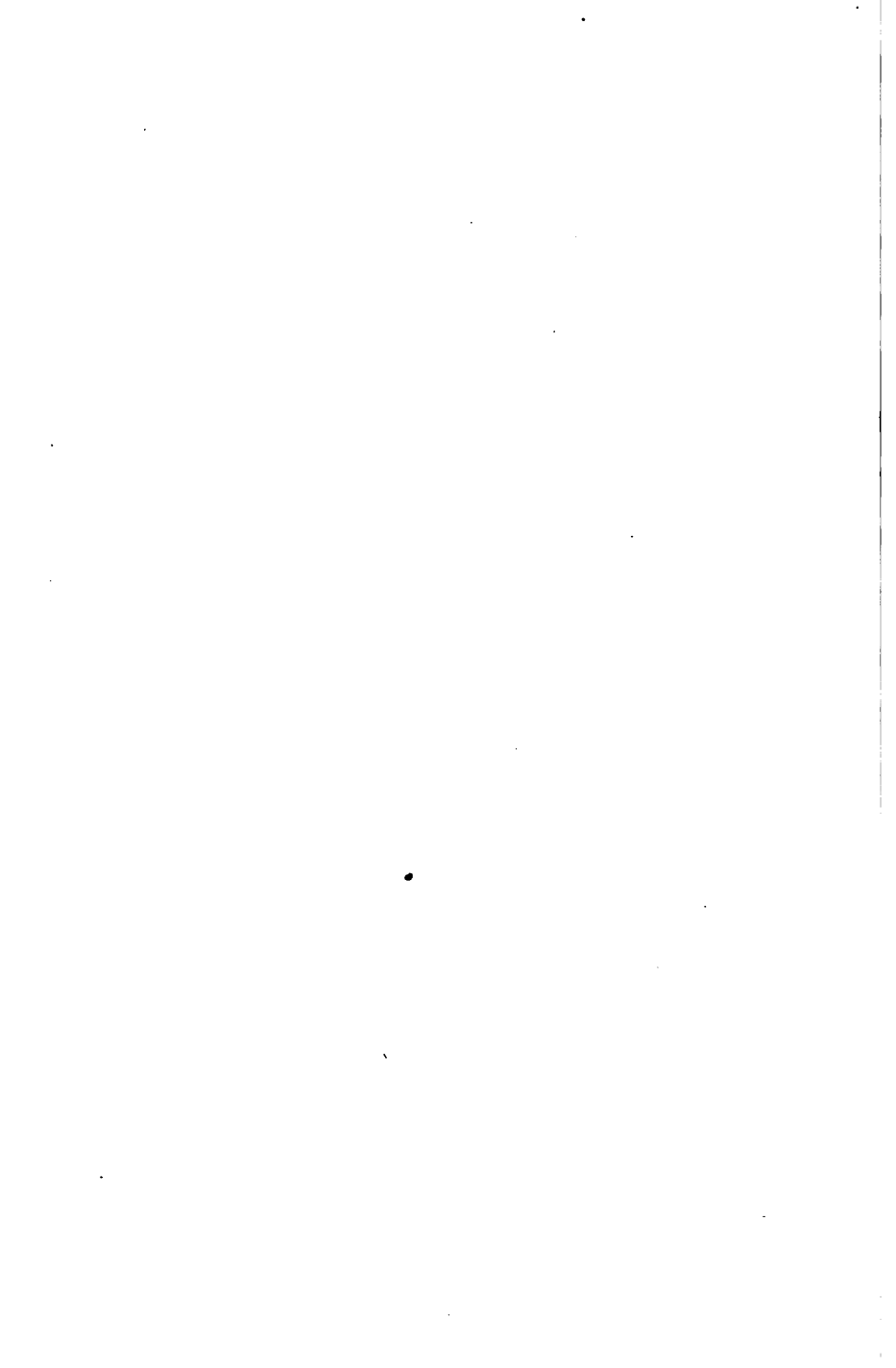
Vastness and age and memories of Eld,
Darkness and desolation and dim Night.

‘Once only in each year do the flood waters of the tropic rains sweep the total surface of the bed rock. The wear of that brief period on the adamantine formation is imperceptible. How long, therefore, has the river occupied in cutting down 1,000 feet into the solid rock? You must look back through the shadowy vista of hundreds of thousands of years that bridge the period of time intervening between us and the dim morning of the world! The Night of Time hides for ever the birthday of that cataract. Empires have risen and fallen, barbarisms become civilisations, races of men flourished and died, religions triumphed and disappeared into eternal oblivion, thousands of plants and animals vanished for ever, the face of Nature changed its aspect in the long wear and waste of centuries, and still those waters roll down that precipice with a wail of lamentation over a dead Past, like the voice of a lone spirit in the agony of unspeakable despair!

‘The gulf has a weird and fearful fascination. You feel



PETER BOTTIE



a mad impulse to leap out into vacancy—to launch out, as Lucifer did, into the wide womb of uncreated night, and disappear for ever into that yawning chasm, from the vast depths of which rise the sheeted columns of vapour—

White and sulphury,
Like foam from the roused ocean of deep hell,
Whose every wave breaks on a living shore.

‘At intervals there are deafening explosions, like the discharge of enormous cannon, and the waves of spray roll out like cannon-smoke, and recoil upon themselves with the force of the impetus, to be swallowed up in the downward-driven current, and finally swept into the abyss. Imagine some Titanic race battling with the demons! There is a rock fortress 600 feet high, with huge cannon projecting from a hundred embrasures, discharging a continuous shower of projectiles, “winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,” into the ranks of the advancing foe! Terrible beyond conception is the diapason of that cannonade!

‘On the left of the main falls is the circular pool, 200 feet in depth, whose sides slope inward from the top, with a narrow outlet, not twenty feet wide, at the bottom. Into this frightful cauldron poured a vast body of water from the main river. It fell clear down, struck the surface of the pool as if it were solid rock, dashed itself into vapour, and threw a dense shower of spray far up the face of the opposite rock, whence it descended in a thousand little rivulets of silver that sparkled like a flood of moonlight on the dark surges of the midnight main. On the left came down a torrent that poured itself out from the dense scrub overhead. That, too, fell clear down on to the pool below in a sheet of glorious spray. Around the face of the rocks grew beautiful and tiny orchids, and ferns, and innumerable little plants looking serenely down, with their green faces, into the awful Maelstrom underneath, indescribably beautiful, amid the war of winds and waters—

Resembling, ’mid the torture of the scene,
Hope watching Madness with unalterable mien.

And gorgeous, blue-winged butterflies emerged from the crevices of the rocks, fluttered slowly down until the spray caught them, and vanished, like a flash of light, into the vortex of remorseless waters, like lost spirits drawn in where the firmament of the Miltonian Hell spouted its cataracts of fire, until caught in the descending flames and swept down into the infinite abyss, nameless in dark oblivion there to dwell. From the still pools up the river came magnificent blue and pink and scarlet lilies, with superb, fan-like green leaves attached. On one of them was a splendid butterfly, floating along like the Indian Cupid in the Nelumbium flower, down the swift current of the sacred river.

‘Swift and painless death for all life once closed in the pitiless embrace of that deadly surge, cleaving the azure with the rapidity of light! One step from where you now stand and you have passed the confluence of the two infinitudes—eternity is before you, and this world, with all its madness, is behind you; your body is dashed to atoms among those jagged and savage rocks; the spectral winds play your death-march on their Æolian harp of pines; the giant cannons fire, in volleying thunder, their last salute; the cataract wraps its white foam-shroud around you; and the mighty mountains, throned on the Primary rocks, stand there aloft in the majesty of eternal silence and immensity as your everlasting monuments! What was the pyramid-piled grave of the Egyptian kings compared to this? A tomb here more worthy of divine Cleora than the old Leucadian steep! This is the home of Poesy, first-born of the gods, and Romance, the parent of golden dreams. Alas! that the cold hand of Science has dragged the Naiads from the waters, and hurled the Dryads and Hamadryads from the woods!

‘Twilight is descending, and I gaze once more into that awful realm of swimming shadows and enormous shapes, with fearful chasms, rolling billows of foam, vast cloud-like vapours, descending columns of yellow, water-like liquid fire, opalescent and iridescent, fantastic rocks scarred and rent by Æons of ages, towering mountains crowned by mournful pines, showers of spray and wandering mist,

mingled with the roar and rush and howl of immeasurable waters plunging in their death agonies into the "fathomless and thundering abyss," in unutterable sublimity of unfettered chaos and illimitable madness. Alas! after all I have only proved how impotent is language to give more than a vague and shadowy outline of that mighty picture, hung there, on the sullen rocks among the grand old mountains, as a presentation picture to Australia from the Art Gallery of the Eternal!'

CHAPTER XXXIX

TO CAPE YORK

Mr. McNaulty of Thursday Island, and the Everlasting Ego. The Alexandrine Ranges—Cook Town—Albany Pass, and the Land's End.

ALL the road up to Cape York after this is a series of beautiful, fantastic or sublime scenery, a constantly-unfolding panorama of change, which keeps me very hard at work, so that I have little time to observe my fellow-passengers. Yet they are all nice, for most of them are Queenslanders, and they are pleased with my enthusiasm over their land, and delighted to help me with anything I require, from a field-glass to the shade of their umbrellas.'

I think an artist is about the most selfish individual in the world when he is engrossed in his work. One day I kept an Australian knight, who was going to England with his daughter, standing behind me, holding his daughter's parasol over my head, without intermission, from breakfast time to tiffin, only flinging a word at him when I wanted to get the name of a promontory or island, and forgetting to thank him or apologise for the martyrdom he must have suffered for all those hours, standing as he did full in the blaze of the sun while he covered my sketch-book with shadow. His daughter, also, a charming young lady, who relieved her papa in the afternoon, I spoke to like a Nero,

ordering her to stand on one side and hold it properly, as if she had been a born slave of Imperial Rome. And still they were pleasant and admired my work, playing in the evenings for me, the knight on the violin and the daughter on the ship piano, to soothe my excited brain.

Although I did not show much gratitude at the time, I shall ever be grateful to that kindly Australian knight, and even more so to his amiable daughter, because she drew, with the unconscious magnetism of her charms, a great deal of the attentions of my cub friend from me, and so permitted me to enjoy the landscape and changes going on. He was no sooner on board than he fell a victim to a violent fit of calf love, and followed her about like that innocent suckling roarer is apt to do its mother, only coming to me for encouragement after she had retired for the night.

I was glad also to find amongst the passengers the genial old man who had told us that narrative of how he was saved by Pears' soap at New Guinea. He was going up to his pearl station at Thursday Island.

When he heard that my destination was also there for the present, he gave me some friendly advice, which I afterwards acted upon with benefit to myself.

'You will likely put up at McNaulty's Hotel when you get there, as it is the only one' (I found out that there was another, but he wanted me to go to the best place). 'Well, take my advice and don't put on any airs with McNaulty, for he can't stand it.'

'You surely don't think I'd be such a cad?' I remonstrated a little indignantly.

'Well, no! I don't, but as a warning in case you might be inclined to try on the high falutin', I'll tell you how he served a man in the same line as you are—one of the special correspondent kind, you know.

'This cad was a Yankee, and had gone on bouncing all up the coast, as he had done all over the Colonies, in a high and mighty way about the almighty Ego. Well, you must know that passengers are landed in small boats at Thursday Island, and are expected to look after their own traps; the ladies are carried in the boatmen's arms over the wet sands, but the men are expected to wade ashore.

‘Well, this everlasting Mr. Ego, who had patronised our Colonies in the newspapers and got kicked out of one or two clubs for his infernal brassy impudence, comes up to Thursday Island, and mighty indignant he was when the boatmen chucked his traps ashore just above low-water mark and made him wade up to the hotel. I suppose he expected a convoy of Government officials to be ready to welcome him ashore, only that’s not our system of doing things up here about.

‘He strode up to the hotel in a flaming rage, with his wet trouser-ends dangling about his sopping socks, and shouted out when he got to the verandah:

“‘I say, landlord, have you such a thing as a —— Chinaman, Malay, black or white fellow about who could cart my luggage up here and be —— to him?’”

‘McNaulty, who, as you will see when you get there, is a big made and independent fellow, came out and looked over the object who was raising the echoes in this way for a while, then he lifted his eyes with a languid air and gazed down to the sea sands where Ego’s traps were lying, and answered with a drawl:

““No, stranger, I hain’t got a —— Chinaman, Malay, nor yet a —— black or white fellow to cart your luggage up and be —— to them, but I’ll tell you something you don’t seem aware of. The tide is coming in, and if you don’t look —— sharp after your luggage it ’ll be washed out to sea before you can get it, and be —— to you.”

‘With which McNaulty disappeared within his bar, leaving Mr. Ego to hop down to the water’s edge and save his traps from wreckage the best way he could.’

I laughed over this yarn, for I had heard all about Ego as I had gone along; it seemed very characteristic of this gentleman. When I afterwards got to the island and interviewed Mr. McNaulty, I saw one of the finest-looking Irishmen I had ever looked upon, with a head like the statue of Achilles, and over six feet of graceful proportions. I left what I could not carry on the shore out of reach of the tide, and went into the bar with my hands full.

‘Can you give me a shake-down here, Mr. McNaulty?’ I asked as I laid down my bundles.

'Yes, I think we can put you up with a rope across at any rate,' answered the landlord graciously, as he served me with a drink, putting the bottle before me to help myself according to the fashion of Queensland. 'But have you any more luggage?'

'Yes,' I replied. 'They are on the sands, but I'll be able to fetch up the rest next turn.'

'Oh no, you don't. Here boy,' shouted out McNaulty to a Malay passing: 'Go down and fetch up this gentleman's luggage.'

The Malay disappeared, and then I said to my host: 'I thought you didn't encourage laziness up here, Mr. McNaulty?'

'Ah, sure you've heard that story about poor Ego, have you?' said he, laughing, as he helped himself to a glass. 'Well, he was a skunk of a fellow, but we treat decent boys differently.'

McNaulty was a fine man, and shrewd, yet most particular in his rules. I lured him once to break through his habits, and have a drink with me, and the islanders told me that it was the first time they had known him do such a thing; so I suppose I must reckon myself a favourite of his. He said that a landlord had no right to accept drinks from his customers, as he thought it low and mean; so when a man invited him to drink he always stood the drink round. Brave old pioneer McNaulty! He has passed away since 1886.

We pass Great Palm Island with White Rock—we are in the latitude of the palm now—the Frankland Islands, Cape Grafton and Port Douglas, with the main road to Herberton and the interior, passing over in a serpentine line the Ranges. Port Douglas is hidden by the Island or Heads as we come up to it.

Over vast stretches where Captain Cook groaned as he crawled along with slow pace and flapping sails, Cape Kimberley, Schnapper Island and Cape Tribulation, with Peter Botte pinnacle towering above the clouds. Cook was a-weary when he got the length of Peter Botte, and so called the place Tribulation.

What splendid ranges those Alexandrine Mountains are,



ALEXANDRINE RANGE

full of colour and mystery! We look up with wonder and awe as we sail along at the base of these marvellous highlands of purple green, dun colour, and softest of dove-grey, as the straight lines of cloudland stand before the suggestions of deep valleys and waterfalls over mighty precipices.

Now we pass a grassy land, all untenanted except by the kangaroo and the wandering black natives, at this part all cannibals, and savage in the extreme to unwary rovers. Then we see what appear like towns of clay huts, the townships of the termites, who are good architects, and can lay out vast cities on the plains when they like; or it may be a mound of rocks on the seashore, standing isolated like a great castle with grass all about, and those tent or corn-stack-like termite buildings dotting the country beyond, for all the world like a ruined baronial keep beside a city of serfs' huts.

Weird and lonely is this brilliantly-lighted land, as we sail along it, day after day, with the slumbering seas around, and the dark blue ocean outside miles away over the Barrier Reef. Now we pass a lightship, moored to the reef, from the deck of which the lonely keepers, man and woman—no, it was only a woman—wave a dish-towel to us as we pass; I tried to realise their feelings, in the day, in the night, in the sunshine, and the storm, from which they were also isolated as they were from humanity. I can somewhat remember that lonely, yardless barque as she lay baking in the sun, so I give a sketch of it.

Past Cape Melville we glide, and my friend who shades me for the time, tells me his theory for those great boulders and detached stones lying about—a submarine earthquake. Past Castle Rock and Cape Flinders and on to the Pass of Albany, with the coral islands in process of formation all about us, and pelicans standing stupidly upon the glistening strips of sand.

We have passed Cook Town and the 'Endeavour' River, where Captain Cook beached his ship for repairs in 1770, and which is one of the most thriving northern seaport towns, having a large mixed population of Europeans, Chinese, Malays, and Kanakas. This is the port most of the *bêche-de-mer* and other traders make from the south end of

New Guinea, as it lies nearly in a straight line from it, although Thursday Island is nearer. It is a clean, well-built city, and the centre of a good country, although not to be compared for productiveness to Cairns.

We see ant-hills all along the coast, ranging from four to ten feet high, like beehives in shape and carefully finished. They look, in the distance, like golden sheaves of gathered corn, and those nearer like clay huts, with streets between each line.

Through Albany Pass and Somerset, once the most northerly settlement, and 1,500 miles from Brisbane, but now sadly neglected since Thursday Island came to the fore as a place of call; it is now used only as a pearl-fishing station, and a pretty station it is. After this we come to Cape York and the islands lying about it. We have reached the extreme limit of the land, and will shortly pass beyond the limits of civilisation.

CHAPTER XL

AT THURSDAY ISLAND

Mr. Kerry's Account of a New-Guinea Massacre.

It was at Thursday Island that I met Mr., or, as he is called amongst his friends, Captain Kerry, the young man who discovered gold in New Guinea.

I was sitting writing the night I first met him, going over my notes, with a dense cloud of mosquitoes humming about me, and trying to singe their tiny wings in the oil lamps in McNaulty's public sitting apartment, when a shy, little, fresh-coloured, fair-haired and blue-eyed youth (as I thought) sat down beside me, and observed in a gentle voice:

'Mr. Hume Nisbet, I presume?'

'Yes,' I replied, laying down my pen and looking at him, and thinking of that historic meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in Africa.

'You have just got back from New Guinea, I am just going over again. My name is Kerry. Hope you enjoyed the trip.'

'What! Kerry the gold-finder?'

'Yes, I did find gold; but they would not believe it, so the less said on that subject the better. I know where to find more, and intend to find enough for myself before I attempt to communicate the fact to my fellows.'

So we struck up a friendship. I told him some of my adventures, and he told me a few of his, during the few days we spent together, before the steamer arrived which was to carry me south.

'It was on December 20, 1885, that I arrived at Kattau, a village to the west of the Fly River.

'Going ashore here I found some native teachers, with their wives and children, who had been sent by the Rev. Mr. McFarlane from Murray Island to found a new mission for the civilisation of the natives—a very mixed race about these parts. One of the teachers I had met before, and owed a debt of gratitude to, as he had saved my life when with the *Melbourne Age* Expedition, at the time we were forced to abandon our captured vessel, May 24, 1884.

'Here I met with a hearty welcome, and after spending the night beside them, sailed up the Kattau River next morning, accompanied by about forty natives as guides and carriers. However, as this river is a very small one, and in parts so shallow that I got fast and grounded several times, I had to return without proceeding very far.

'Next day being Sunday, I went to the little hut beside the native teachers' house, under which service was usually held, to listen to the native service and watch the effect which it had upon these untamed savages. This little house was built of bamboo posts, covered with the dried fronds of the palm, and raised about six feet from the earth. To gather the natives at the hour appointed for service, a boy went round the village beating two pieces of wood against one another, which did duty for a bell.

'The natives came in great numbers, and squatted on the ground, while the black teacher tried to explain to them, in his own quaint symbolic manner, his message of grace;

but I observed an air of insolent mockery pervading the assembly; the natives nudged one another, laughed scornfully, and although they listened to the words uttered in their own language, paid but small respect to his earnestness.

'As I stood watching these ominous signs of disaffection around me, with my back against a pile next to the teacher (two of my own "boys" beside me¹), and keeping a keen lookout for danger from the outside, I saw a man rush double-quick from the village, shouting all the way along the beach as he ran.

'In an instant the church was deserted, men, women and children decamping in a regular stampede, *sans cérémonie*, which seemed to astonish the poor teacher very greatly.

'The women and children passed into the huts, while the men ran to the large "tapu-house" where their meetings are held, and where they keep their war-implements. Here, quickly arming themselves with bows, arrows and clubs, they marched in battle order and with great haste into the forest.

'The teacher, fearing that they meant some mischief to the house and my schooner, got out his gun to protect his family, while I looked to the state of my revolvers and rifle, and warned my boys to be ready for action. However, hours passed away without any signs either from the bush or the village, the women and children keeping indoors, so that we could get no information of their movements or intentions.

'It was about sundown that we heard the distant sounds of the war-drums beating, so, taking my two black "boys" with me, I went out in the direction of the noise, and getting on to a ridge where I could command a good stretch of country, saw them returning in a most excited state of exultation.

'They had been fighting with some rival tribe, and evidently had gained a great victory, for they were all yelling at the highest pitch of their voices, dancing with

¹ 'Boys.' Malay or Kanaka seamen are so called by the traders in the Straits.—H. N.

most jubilant antics, and beating upon their iguana-drums furiously, while two of them bore on their shoulders a long bamboo cane, from which were suspended a number of bloody, human heads, rove through each mouth, as we sometimes see fish gilled.

‘On they came with their ghastly trophies; thirty-three heads I counted, as they rushed past the ridge on which I stood watching them, on their way to the tapu-house, which is the house of the village set solely apart as a place of meeting (a kind of temple or club-house, where men only are allowed to enter).

‘I watched them lay the heads down in front of the tapu-house. Then they held a great talk for some time, after which one of the men and a boy, who had joined from the huts (at the doors of which the women had now appeared), lifting up three of the heads, bore them towards the house of the teachers, who had barricaded their door, and now waited inside with fear and trembling.

‘Following the head-bearers to the mission-house, I heard them shout to the teachers to come out and see what they had brought home, but receiving no reply they carried them back again to where the rest were lying, and taking them all up, they put them into the pots, which meanwhile the women had brought forth, after lighting large fires in the open spaces.

‘It had now grown quite dark, being about eight o’clock, and the large wood fires flared out luridly to the night, with the dark forms around them, dancing their war-dance and beating upon their drums, while the thirty-three heads were cooking in the pots. A weird picture it made, and the more horrible to us knowing the contents of those pots.

‘After looking for a time I went down to the shore, where I had left my dinghy, and rowed aboard the schooner, which lay at anchor very close.

‘About nine o’clock, and while I was trying to swallow some tea (not an easy task, with the thought of the supper the natives were having in the village), I was interrupted by hearing a loud shouting from the shore, and my name being called; so hastily leaping into the boat, and going over to the bank, I saw the teachers with their wives and

children, standing all in a group, greatly excited, and crying :
"Very good! You go, get all gun; man going to kill."

'On hearing this, I went again on board, and getting together all my guns, dynamite, and ammunition, I hurried with my boys up to the whare,¹ where the teachers and their wives had now returned, after which we fastened the apertures, and putting out the fire inside, waited for the attack.

'We had not very long to wait before the natives came on, shouting again for the teachers to come out and join in their feast, surrounding the hut and making a terrible din, to all of which we paid no attention. The wives of the teachers were in a state of mortal fear, as they could see through the crevices, besides the savage crowd near at hand, others walking and rushing about the beach, carrying fire-sticks, and the skulls of the slaughtered bushmen.

'I made sure that we would have a hard fight for it that night, as they were maddened by their victory, exasperated by the teachers' refusal to join in their revels, and afraid, if they allowed any of us to escape, that we would tell the "bom-bom," or war-ship (of which they have a wholesome dread) of these evil actions, so that we could see that they had resolved to go on the principle of dead men telling no tales, and meant to kill the whole party.

'After a time, finding that they could not force us out by threats, and afraid to break in upon us, knowing that we had firearms, they retired once more to their fires, leaving us comparatively free to decide what was next to be done.

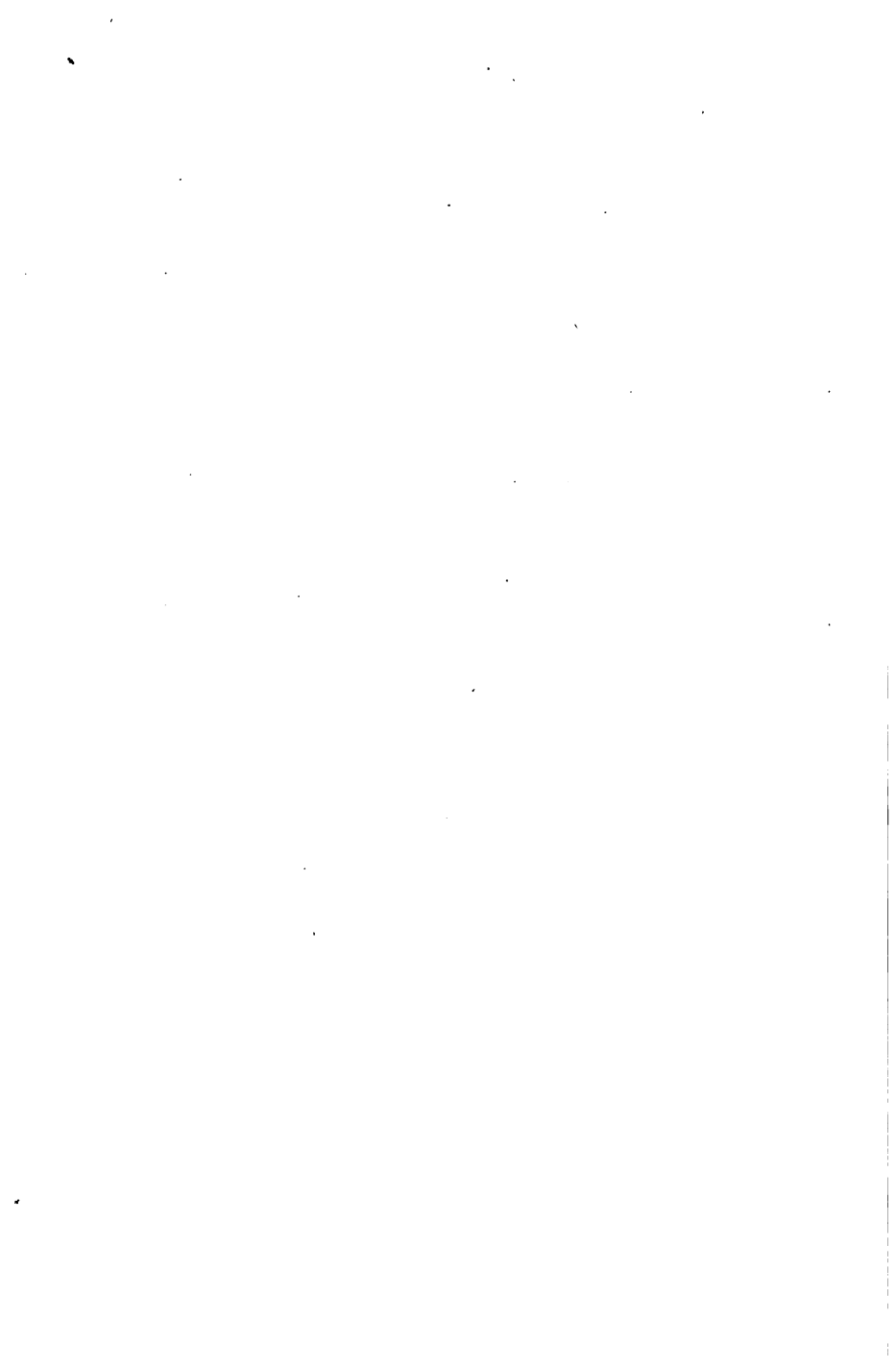
'When we were thus left in peace, I proposed to the teachers that they should bring their wives and children, and come on board as soon as the tide turned, and that if they did so I would take them over to Murray Island, it no longer being safe for them to stay with the tribe after this hostile manifestation. With this proposal they all seemed delighted, and agreed to it at once.

'So till midnight we were engaged packing up the things

¹ Kerry is a native of New Zealand, and uses the Maori name 'Whari' for native hut.—H. N.



CAPE MELVILLE



they wished to take with them, rice, &c., and then, looking out and seeing the coast clear, I prepared to go aboard, so that I might quietly get the schooner ready for sailing, telling them before I left to be sure to come to me as soon as the moon rose, as it was then that the tide turned, also agreeing as to a signal between us, so that I might not mistake them in the dark for a war-canoe.

‘It was at two o’clock A.M. that the moon showed a faint yellow section above the clouds and inky palm-tops. We were ready to sail, and only waited upon the coming of the refugees.

‘On shore the fires were dying down, and now shone with dull red sparks in the direction of the village. Above the moon, in the darkly clear space, the stars flashed brightly, and repeated their lustre in broken reflections, which danced about and mingled with the dull crimson of the dying embers ashore, and the amber-yellow, lustreless light of that duskiy-rising morning moon.

‘We had been on the *qui vive* all night, and while I was watching and listening for the signal, I heard the soft splash of paddles, and suddenly caught sight of what appeared to be a canoe crossing the faint moon-track towards our bows, from the shore. As it slid into obscurity again I could make out another in its wake. It was in too dangerous proximity for me to feel satisfied, as I could not see enough to make out whether it contained friends or foes, so I hailed them before they could have time to come near enough to surprise me, giving at the same time the signal agreed upon between myself and my friends. No reply; but I could hear that they were advancing rapidly.

“Who goes there?” I called out again, without getting any response except the quicker splash of the paddles.

‘Six times I hailed them without any reply, and just as I was about to give my boys the command to shoot, the teachers’ friend sang out “Siby!” which caused my heart to leap almost into my mouth. Another second, through their careless inattention to my hailing, and we would have had the blood of them and their families upon our souls. I suppose the intense excitement under which they were

labouring at the moment made them forget all about our agreement.

‘I had got them all safely aboard, and was just ready to start, when, after taking one or two uneasy turns along the deck, and some regretful looks ashore, the teachers stopped in front of me, and asked me to take their wives and children out of harm’s way, but as for themselves, they had decided to go ashore again and see it out.

“We came here to be killed, if God wished it, and so we cannot run away.”

‘I sought to reason with them, talking all through that moonlit morning, until the day broke over the distant banks, but it was of no avail. They only shook their heads sadly, turning their big melancholy eyes towards the bent heads of their crouching wives, from whom they were probably parting for ever, this side of the grave, in that fatalistic and blind adherence to what they considered their duty, and replied to all my reasons with the words, “If God wishes us to be killed, we ought not to run away.”’

‘Just before day dawned the natives in the village awoke, and we could hear them all talking at once, making a great noise with their tongues and the clashing together of their weapons, at which the poor fellows who seemed resolved to win crowns of martyrdom shivered and grew leaden-hued, but still they asked me not to delay setting them ashore; so at last, very unwillingly, I got down my boat from the deck, while they were bidding their wives and children farewell.

‘Natives of the South Seas do not make so much of partings as we white people do. I suppose they feel as keenly as we could possibly do, only they don’t show it. They were ready as soon as I was, the leave-taking being got over without a sound, and indeed had scrambled over the side and into the boat before I was quite prepared, leaving the bereaved women and children a shapeless mingling of shadows on the deck in the faint light of that breaking morning.

‘When we reached the beach the fighting-men of the tribe gathered around us, making a big talk, but with a vast amount of yesterday’s courage slept away. They were

evidently very uneasy in their minds about this victory of theirs, and wanted to make me promise not to tell upon them to the Government or big ships—"Bom-boms" as they called them. I had told them, when threatening us the day before, that I would send the man-of-war to blow them up, and break down their cocoa-nut trees, and to-day they were remembering these words with gloomy forebodings.

'They did not attempt to injure us as we passed through them, but followed us all up to the mission-house, howling like bad schoolboys caught in the act, and imploring me not to tell upon them, a promise, however, which I would not commit myself to.

'After I had settled the teachers into their old quarters, I resolved to spend that day with them, partly to see if they would not alter their minds, and partly to see if the natives would settle down, but was a little astonished to hear my friend propose to go and burn down the great tapu-house. He had taken a notion that the devil dwelt in that tapu-house, as all the evil was concocted there, and that Kattau would always be a bad place while the house was permitted to stand.

'I tried my hardest to point out to him the danger and folly of such a step, but he was as obstinate in this conviction as he was firm in his desire to become a martyr, so that, being only his guest, I was fain to yield and permit him to act as he felt inclined.

'He then took a fire-stick and went to the upper village, I going with him and the other teachers, to see that he came to no harm, and a crowd of the natives following after us to watch what we were about to do.

'This tapu-house was about two hundred feet long, of one floor, as these buildings are west of Motu-Motu; as you go eastward of Moresby you see spires and double floors, but about the Fly they are all in the form of a flat shed or barn raised on piles, with palm-thatched roofs and sides, and one aperture at each end for ingress and exit; the roofs are fashioned like inverted boats, with a decided lean to one side.

'Of course, being composed of dry bamboo posts, split cane, and brittle palm-fronds, it needed very little to set it in a blaze, and soon it was reduced to ashes.

'The natives, although armed at the time with spears and bows, &c., did not offer any active resistance to the movements of the teacher, doubtless being afraid of our revolvers and Winchesters, and knowing from experience the effects of dynamite. Daylight also is apt to take the pluck out of most people in the fighting way, and particularly natives, who have had a little experience of, without too great an intimacy with, the magical powers of gun-powder and shot. They are apt to imagine the slender tube to be a living object which can blast them at any moment, as surely as lightning does the forest trees.

'While the house was catching fire they only howled and made frantic motions of despair, but hung back from it, even although at the time it contained most of the wealth of the tribe; and when a few charred stumps alone remained in the midst of a little mound of white ashes surrounded by a blackened circle of burnt grass, they only flocked together, crying and moaning all day long, till sundown, after which they got up and shouted that they would murder the incendiary when I was away.

'All through that second night we could hear them lamenting the loss of their tapu-house, and shouting vengeance at intervals, so that, tired out as we were with our previous nights of anxiety, we dared not think of taking a rest, and I spent the hours of darkness striving my very hardest to turn my friend and his companions from their reckless resolves, and to induce them to come with me to Kawai on the Fly, where I intended, for the present, to leave their families; but nothing I could say seemed to move them in the slightest degree.

"Take our women and children to Kawai, we'll stay and be killed."

'I had to go next morning, and as I could not kidnap them I was forced to leave these three noble and devoted, but most rash men, to their self-imposed fate. However, I left them what I could spare in the way of weapons and ammunition, showing them how to use the dynamite if required, and then I sailed away for the Fly River, but with a very foreboding heart.

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'Upon my return from my journey up the Fly I again called at Kattau. On shore all was quiet, and the huts seemed deserted. It is no uncommon sight in New Guinea to pass a thriving community one voyage, and return to find only deserted huts fast going to decay. The burning of the tapu-house may have broken up Kattau, I thought. Besides, as I was suffering at the time from a wound in my leg and could, only with difficulty, limp about, I sent one of my "boys" ashore to find out about the teachers. Very soon the "boy" came back and told me that they had been killed, on which I at once went over to the house, to find it empty. I shouted at the top of my voice, but no one replied, until at last one small boy crept out of one of the huts (thereby showing me that the natives were only hiding).

'On questioning the little fellow he informed me that "teacher-man ran away into bush, and that all *man* want head belong of me," so that if I wanted to keep that article safely between my shoulders I had better go aboard, and inquire no further about the matter.

'We stayed at Kattau two or three days, firing dynamite by day to let them know that we were there, if they were alive, also beating about the bush as far as we dare venture, besides keeping large fires burning each night on the beach, but without any success; so at last I was forced to the conclusion that the little boy was telling lies when he said they had escaped, and that there were three more victims added to the long and bloody list of New-Guinea massacres.'

CHAPTER XLI

SAVAGES

At Thursday Island—Kanakas—Superstitions of Savages—Will-Power—Cannibalism.

THURSDAY ISLAND lies about 1,500 miles from Brisbane, in lat. 10° 33' south and long. 142° 10' east, just off the northern coast of Australia, and between the other Cook-christened islands, Prince of Wales, Howe, Hammond,

Friday, Wednesday and Good. They all range at about a distance of between one and five miles from one another.

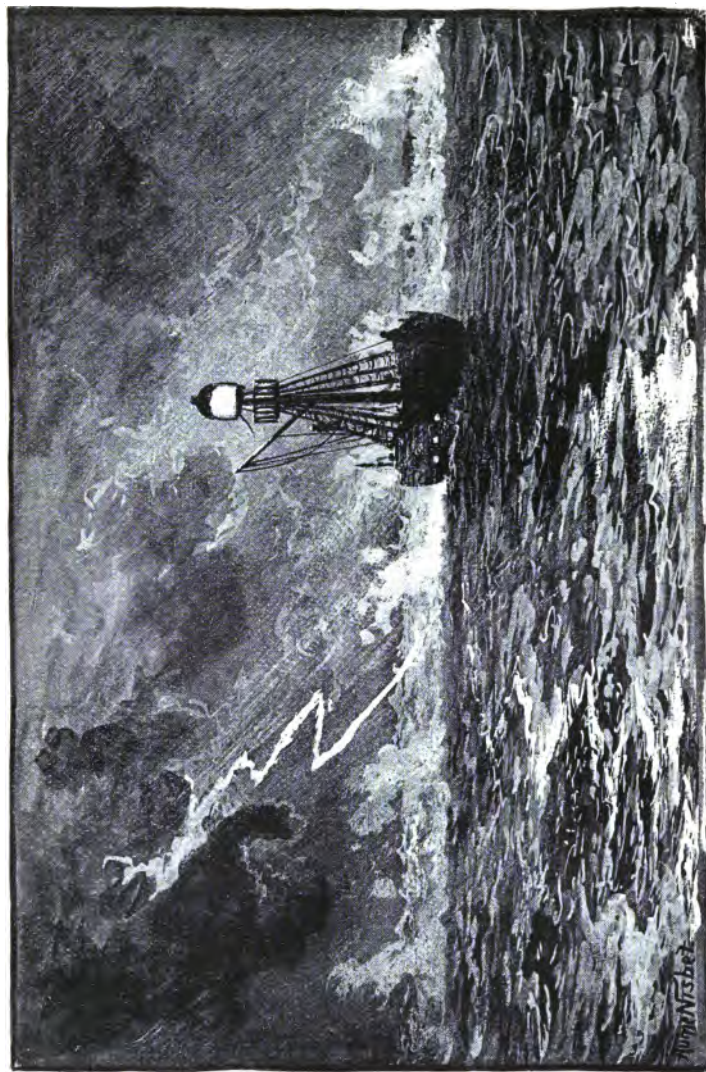
The port is called Kennedy, and is the regular place of call for steamers coming by way of China and other northern ports; a nice little settlement of about fifty or so houses, two hotels, one store (Burns, Philp & Co.'s), one Roman Catholic chapel, and the Government residence. The population is very mixed, Chinese, Malays, and Kanaka pearl-divers being the majority, with a small sprinkling of Government officials, and migratory pilots waiting on vessels to take down through the reefs.

The ladies are very scarce at Thursday Island. A short time before I got there, two lady passengers, seeing the scarcity of their sex, had landed between mail steamers. The genial but morality-loving Governor, Hon. John Douglas, promptly packed the nymphs off the island by the next ship, but not before they had done a vast amount of damage amongst the young men under his charge. The ladies went off to other fields, laden with unset pearls, while the young men remained to mourn their advent.

The Kanakas are the divers here, and are much prized by the pearl-station owners. They get 60*l.* per month for their wages, besides all the pearls which they can find in the shells, as it is only the shells that their masters prize. A pair of good shells sell to the traders for 15*s.*; therefore, as these divers can make besides their wages in pearls sometimes 80*l.* or 100*l.* per month, they are very lavish and extravagant with their money; indeed, all the time I was at Thursday Island I felt like a very poor white man.

They go about carrying great rolls of bank-notes in their outside coat pockets, and when they enter a bar, order their gin by the case, pitching down their bank-notes carelessly on the counter for the landlord to pay himself out of them, and hardly ever looking at the change as they shovel it up and stuff it into their pockets again, drinking from the tumbler and by the tumblerful without diluting the gin with water.

They are mostly all Roman Catholics, yet are exceed-



THE LIGHTSHIP

ingly kind to their poor brethren who are working amongst the savages as Protestant teachers at the rate of 20*l.* per year, and finding themselves out of that small yearly stipend. These reckless divers are constantly sending over money from their plenty to help the poor martyrs in their wretched poverty, otherwise I fear there would be even greater mortality amongst the South Sea Islanders than there is, through dire starvation as well as fever.

These Kanaka divers are very shrewd in worldly wisdom, in spite of their superstitions. I went to the morning mass at the little Roman church at Thursday Island, and felt much amused by the French priest there and his dusky congregation.

He was lecturing them on the virtue of giving to the poor and the Church. 'You see, children, de poor Virgin dere, all bare and unadorned—is it not a shame?'

He paused, and looked at the stolid rows of faces fronting him, but no one seemed to take the hint. Then he went on afresh:

'Not for mine self would I ask of your plenty, which you waste on gin, but for de Church, de Blessed Virgin, and de poor.'

No apparent comprehension was expressed on the part of the hearers. They were attentive but irresponsive.

'Ah ha! Now I know you have pearls—many good pearls—in your breasts, under your shirts, hiding.' Every black paw made a clutch through the open shirt-fronts, while the men looked as if a dark secret had been discovered.

'Ah, do not be afraid, I would not take one little pearl from one of you. But yet see, de poor Virgin has not yet one single string of de pure beautiful pearls to hang round her neck for de good of de poor, and yet you melt them down your own necks every day!'

Poor foreign father! He was deeply in earnest I could hear, but as I went out I did not see any of the pearls forthcoming. I have often wondered since if the Virgin has been provided yet with a little chaplet.

The superstition of savages has long been a careful study of mine—their wonderful will-power, cannibal customs, laws of tapu, &c.; and as I am shortly going to take you

amongst the savages of New Guinea, perhaps it would not be amiss to say a little about them before I go on.

Will-power amongst Savages.

If it is a hard matter for the civilised races to comprehend the calm endurance of the savage under moments of torture and agony which would break down the most heroic resolutions of a European, the peculiar will-power which makes him able to give up life at an allotted hour, and pass from robust health to a painless death, without any of those artifices being resorted to by which the wearied of existence try to get surcease in our barbarous western climes, is utterly beyond solution.

Another wonderful point about this is that the savage is never tired of his life. He can endure torture stoically when there is no other escape (but no one dies harder when in the hands of his enemy), as he can die quietly and consistently at the time appointed by his medicine-man or omen.

That savages cannot feel pain is the common verdict given by those who have watched them suffer ; but this is not the case, their nerve-tissues being exactly the same as ours, and their feelings as acute as our own. But I am of opinion that they have qualities which we, the more favoured races, have lost ; a will or soul power which, at emergency, can subjugate the physical, and make them as insensible to pain as chloroform or ether can make us ; a brain-force which can either act as an opiate or deadly poison as the possessor wills at the time, and which it is as utterly impossible for a European to acquire as it is for him to master the magical secrets and gifts of the astral brotherhood.

These are all gifts of race, and the slow development of centuries of peculiar training, and are as impossible for us to comprehend as it is for the refined Buddhist or high-caste Brahmin to comprehend the coarse brutality of our daily habits of life. We, with a characteristic method all our own, cry ' Bosh,' and laugh at, as imposture, what they accept from constant experiences, completely and naturally beyond our efforts to disprove.

All the Eastern experiences of the present day the religious or credulous amongst us accept with faith as having occurred in the past, but as utterly impossible now. There are no ghosts or re-appearances at the present day in England.

All our supernatural phenomena came from the East; but the last of those manifestations, according to even the most credulous of our thinkers, closed with St. John at Patmos, nineteen hundred years ago, when he wound up his Revelations with the words, 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly,' &c.

In the East they still have revelations and powers which we allow them to have experienced or possessed long ago, but scoffingly deny to them now.

However, it is not the gifts of second-sight, soul-reading, or spirit separation, and materialisation, which are solely confined to the century-prepared and uncontaminated Eastern, but this life-yielding quality, which is shared alike by the lowest-caste Pariah, the least intellectual of the Africans, and the most primitive savage of the South Seas.

They can, by will alone, stretch out their limbs and pass from existence, when inclined, as completely and as easily as we can turn down and extinguish a lamp-wick.

At Kandy, when I tossed coins with an ordinary Indian and a Buddhist, I tossed and they guessed. With the Hindoo, who stood apart, it was an ordinary game of chance, such as might be played between Englishmen, but with the Buddhist, who stood near, and always touched lightly with his finger-tips the back of my hand which covered the coin, it was not guessing, but telling, for he won each time.

I have seen two Scedy men, and several Maoris, and one aboriginal of Australia, die because they had a warning or omen that they were to die.

Where the warning came from, or how they received it, I cannot tell, and they either could not or would not explain. One day they would come up in perfect health and calmly announce to their friends or tribe that they were going to die at a certain time next day, or two days or ten days after date of announcement, and the friends never

doubted the statement or tried to combat it, but straight-way began their preparations for the funeral, and the *corpse* never disappointed them.

On the voyage to Australia on board the P. and O. steamship 'Parramatta,' I have mentioned how one of the Scedy boys struck work. 'What is the matter with him?' inquired the officer of the rest of the stokers, for he would not speak.

'He got big dibbles in him inside and going to die.'

'When?' again inquired the officer.

'To-morrow, at tiffin-time.'

The officer shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

'Will he really die?' I asked of him.

'Up to the moment,' replied he, 'and all the medicine and talking in the world won't alter his determination'; and, in spite of the doctor trying his utmost to rouse the negro, he was dead at tiffin-hour, and buried at sundown.

I was once going through the bush of New Zealand with a Maori, when, as we were resting, a lizard ran over him; he caught the lizard, and after quietly counting some marks upon it, said to me, as if it was an ordinary event, 'This fellow tell me I die in eight days more,' and calmly continued the interrupted conversation.

'But he ran over me also, and I don't feel like dying.'

'P'raps! Pakihi not Maori.'

No more was said at that time, and we went on and joined the tribe. When in my friend's wharé, the lamenting began while the doomed one made his preparations.

On the eighth day his prediction had come to pass, and his wife was a widow. I watched him go about day after day, apparently in usual health, and eat as usual, only by himself. On the seventh day he took his last meal, and, drawing his mat about him within his circumscribed tapued space, waited motionlessly until the end came. When the sun rose on the eighth morning he was still sitting on his haunches, with his knees drawn up, and his head drooping upon his breast; but the sun-shaft, which darted over the hill-top and lake-surface to the tapued cliff whereon he perched, smote dully upon the glazed eyeballs of a staring corpse.

Amongst the aboriginals of Australia, if a man points a bone at another it bewitches him, and draws him to death, and he will perish as surely as if that pointed bone had pierced his heart.

With the savages of the South Seas it is the same. Although each island and tribe has its different omens and bodes, the fact remains the same, when the fiat has gone forth, and the native knows that he is doomed, he never attempts to struggle against his fate. He sits down, or stretches himself out, and when the appointed time arrives his heart stops beating, or that subtile fluid which he bears within him passes through his brain by the force of his will, and liberates his spirit without a gasp or a groan. He is alive one minute and quietly waiting, and the next he is annihilated.

Cannibal Customs.

Cannibalism is the most atrocious habit of primitive man; that is, to us, the more favoured, who have only been addicted to the devouring of the flesh of the lower animal world—pigs, oxen, sheep, &c.

It is only to be compared to those atrocities which have lately convulsed the East End of the world's Metropolis with appalling horror—that is, to the stranger unaccustomed to savage manners and traditions; but cannibalism, to the European accustomed to the savage and his daily life, can no more be compared to the doings of 'Jack the Ripper' than an East End coke fireplace can be compared to a smelting-furnace. No, this modern monster must carry off the palm, in the grades of atrocity, from the savages; he is unique in these later centuries.

To kill and eat the flesh of a man is bad, very bad; even the savages themselves in some cases shiver at the thought of the 'long pork'; but this nineteenth century outcome of the decline of civilisation is what I would term the diletantism of decay. We find a precedent for it in the later days of the Roman Empire, when empresses and patrician ladies went into the shambles, and vied with the courtesans, tearing the hearts out of their living victims, and returning,

as this modern fiend has done, by a natural rebound, from the hypercritical stage to the primitive.

In all this we may read the constantly-recurring history of man, and a proper interpretation of the Flood, the burning of Sodom, and confusion of tongues: the young nation, savage and robust, becoming civilised, loving song and poesy, growing into correct sound, independent of meaning, sinking into the critical or *used-up stage*, wallowing in the mire of disgust, lacking enthusiasm, and incapable of enjoying life, rushing by the natural sequence of over-refinement and inanity into 'Lustmordt' some grades below the rude savage, to be finally merged into, or lost before a coming race of sturdy barbarians.

We, as a nation, have now reached the farthest stretch of the elastic band of civilisation: a little further, and the band snaps or becomes released, and it rebounds, and we are as we were when Julius Cæsar first discovered the utility of our land.

Our best writers cannot get subjects ghastly or morbid enough to serve up to the jaded tastes of their super-refined readers. Our best actors must go to the most grotesque of weirdness and unnaturalism before they can find a place in the world of fame. 'Jack the Ripper' is the natural outcome of this age of *blasé* education; he barely takes the one step beyond the writers of the age which is required to complete the age's dissolution.

The original savage is a man who has been born and bred up to the belief that the flesh of *an enemy* is good to eat, as *we* have been born and bred up to the belief that the flesh of an unoffending animal is good to use.

When the savage becomes more advanced he gets ceremonies, institutions, superstitions, and laws of *tapu*, which I shall hereafter describe; thus the sacrifice of *his enemy* becomes a religious rite, and added to the pleasure of the flesh-lust, is the more intense delight of revenge.

To eat an enemy, with the most primitive man, is to enjoy an exquisite pleasure.

To eat an enemy, with the semi-educated savage is to disgrace and degrade that victim for ever afterwards; added to the animal pleasure before mentioned.

The last and worst savage is he who has received the teachings of centuries: he has gone on from stage to stage, from the warlike, the romantic, the scientific, the *dilettante*, to the ferociousness which only torture and warm blood can rouse up *just a little*.

In New Guinea we find the most primitive savage. The Papuan native of this island has no religion, very little superstition, and no reverence for Tapu, that widespread law of sacredness which governs other natives of the islands of the South Seas and New Zealand. He kills his enemy, but only his enemy, wherever he can catch him, and naturally cuts him up and eats him, as we might do a fish we had caught, or a deer we had stalked.

There is no more feeling in the matter with him than the most inoffensive alderman may have towards mankind while he is enjoying his first plate of turtle soup. He has no blood-guiltiness about him, but may be as gentle in his demeanour, while enjoying his *grill*, as any benevolent philanthropist who has ordered a beefsteak at Gatti's or the Criterion; and this is just what I want my readers to understand as I go on to describe this uninviting habit of the savage in his native state.

I want him, at once and for ever, to banish from his mind all preconceived notions, and be able to place himself exactly on the same platform upon which the cannibal stands, and regard the subject as the human-flesh eater himself does—*i.e.*, merely as an everyday occurrence, or rather as a choice bit which does not come every day, and which, therefore, ought to be enjoyed all the more when it does come.

Not at all to be compared with the feelings which, I naturally suppose, must animate this East End midnight solitary reveller in the blood of his victims! The debasement and horrible fascination of cruelty and danger are wanting, the haunting dread of discovery, the weirdness of that lonely hour when he is beside his victim, the after-effects of suspense and unsated longing for more excitement—these are removed altogether from the placidity and utter unconsciousness of evil with which the true-born cannibal will tell you that 'it is good, very much nicely good, much more better than pork.'

There are, of course, even amongst the Papuans and South Sea Islanders, tribes which view this habit with great abhorrence; natural in their case, as they are closer to it, and occupy the same position to their man-eating neighbours as our sheep and cattle do with us. Having had dealings with both cannibal and non-cannibal tribes, I must say that I would much sooner trust my life with the cannibals than I would risk it amongst the non-cannibals, and I think in this opinion most travellers who have had intercourse with the savage tribes will agree with me without demur.

The true cannibal is an open-hearted, easily-satisfied, and confiding friend when he gives his friendship. No man, in the natural state, ever forgives an enemy, that being an artificial abnegation utterly at variance with the laws of Nature and of man. He wears no stamp of ferocity upon his features, no assassin-sowl or evil, sidelong glances, but, holding his head erect with all the consciousness of rectitude, he will meet you with a smiling, candid look, and give you an honest embrace.

He will also invite you to his feast, if he loves you—an hour will win his affection towards those who know how to gain it; he will offer his friend a share of his allotted piece of the broiled flesh, and look with pity upon him for refusing to partake of such a treat; he will be tender and affectionate while he picks the bones, which are afterwards to be carefully polished and worn, as ornaments and trophies of war, about his person. Such a genial, good-natured, honest fellow is the true unbiassed cannibal.

The non-cannibals—*i.e.*, the hunted ones—are timid, cowardly, suspicious, and treacherous, as they ought to be under the circumstances. They give no friendship, place no faith in anything or any one, and, wherever they can with safety, lure and murder the stranger.

So much for the effects of cannibalism. Now I will give a few descriptions of the modes of using the victims after they are caught.

Throughout all the tribes the body is always divided either before or after being cooked, and carefully apportioned off according to the social position or grade of the natives. Amongst the Maoris the chief gets the eyes and



A NEW GUINEA DANDY

brains, in New Guinea he takes the breast, as the most honourable portion, to himself; so that a visitor who has learnt their habits may know the chief or nobleman from the plebeian by the bones decorating his person or house.

Mr. Andrew Goldie, naturalist, of Port Moresby, informed me that he once arrived at a cannibal feast in the eastern peninsula of New Guinea just in time to rescue a little maiden of about ten years old, whom the cannibals were about to roast alive. He succeeded in buying her from them, by exchanging for her a pig and several pounds of tobacco, with the alternative of shooting them all down if they refused his offer.

The custom of this tribe was to prepare the victims by giving them a cathartic, after which they forced them to eat bananas and yams until they were replete almost to bursting, and next they placed them fronting a fire, and slowly roasted them alive for the sake of the *vegetables* within them; this was a tribe of epicures who would not cook killed victims, and their tit-bits were the stuffed entrails, which they prepared as I have stated.

Some travellers are in the habit of telling wild stories which must be received with great caution. I once met a gentleman who had lived in the Northern Island, New Zealand, and who not only ought to have known the natives better than to tell the story he did, but from his social position ought to have been most guarded how he deviated from strict facts.

He said that he once lived in an out-of-the-way part of the bush, where he was near some friendly natives, a family of whom, comprising the husband, wife, and a young child, attended to his wants at odd times. They lived some distance from his house, but used to come backwards and forwards as the whim took them.

When they were there—the father breaking wood, and the mother cleaning the house—they generally brought the baby, a fine little boy of about five years old, who used to play about in the sun.

One day they came without the baby. When the master asked where he was, the mother made some excuse, and

went on with her work. Again and again they came, but never brought the boy, until at last, growing suspicious, he asked the mother for a straight reply, upon which she answered, laconically and carelessly, 'In the pot and eaten.'

This white man said that the Maori mother told him that they had been hungry, and having no other meat, they had killed, cooked, and devoured their only son.

Another of this voracious gentleman's tales was of a Maori husband, who had gone out hunting the wild pig, and on starting left instructions with his wife to prepare the oven against his home-coming with the spoil. After some hours, during which his Waheni got ready the pit or oven (an operation which takes some time, and which I will describe hereafter), he returned empty-handed, with the exception of his meré, or club, and hunting-spear.

'Have you got the pit ready for the pig?' he asked.

'Yes, but where is the pig?' inquired the wife.

'You are the pig for this day,' he replied, with grim jocularly, knocking her on the head, and tumbling her into the heated pit amongst the potatoes and other vegetables; and then, like the respectable widower he was, sat down to enjoy a pipe while his dinner was being cooked.

That both these were clumsy lies, even although told for the purpose of exposing the awful state of the benighted heathen, any one with the slightest knowledge of the laws of Tapu would at once know, but still they imposed upon some portion of this gentleman's audience, and because they did so I expose them now.

It is impossible for a Maori, above all men, to kill, mutilate, or eat his own blood relations, because that would disgrace himself and all his family, making them lose caste and become slaves for generations according to the laws of his own faith or religion, a degradation which they fear more than a thousand deaths by starvation.

Kill and eat an enemy if you like—the more the better for your prestige as a Toa—but never a friend.

This same lecturer, I found out afterwards, had been compelled to vacate New Zealand for some nefarious dealings with baked Maori heads. He had traded for them

with the natives for museum purposes, without inquiring how they were prepared, or how obtained.

If the wife of a Maori offended him mortally, and he wished to disgrace her utterly and all her relations, he might, as the keenest revenge he could perpetrate, kill and eat her, but in such an extreme case he would prepare himself for a life-long vendetta, worse than any Corsican feud.

The story of the first cannibal in New Zealand was a case of the same sort. A chief caught a faithless wife with her paramour, and, after due deliberation, killed and ate them both as the worst form of hatred, contempt, and disgrace he could think of inflicting upon the guilty pair; and from this rose the custom of cannibalism with them, purely a scheme of revenge.

The feast of slaughter is a very sacred ceremony amongst nations where Tapu or Dabu holds sway. The partakers must be careful not to touch the flesh with their fingers or their lips, therefore they use special forks or prongs for the purpose, and are very cautious how they insert the pieces into their mouths; the flesh is chewed slightly, and bolted as quickly as possible.

The body is divided and cooked by the priests, who are always sacred, and therefore may touch what they like as far as they are concerned themselves. The priesthood is an isolated, accursed, but feared class, as were the embalmers of Egypt.

Amongst nations where Tapu is a dead letter, or unknown, no forks are used; the women cook the victim, and each man gets his own share according to the grade he holds.

In New Guinea the tit-bit is the breast-piece; in New Zealand it is the eyes; in other parts it is the brains, or tongue, as the fashion may run.

A story is told of two rival chiefs who were brought to London by different Missionary Societies as specimen converts. They both behaved themselves very well in the drawing-rooms and on the platforms, but it was thought advisable to send them back in different ships.

By bad luck it chanced that the two ships touched the Cape of Good Hope, and the two converts landed and met

one another on neutral ground for the first time ; religion was forgotten in the heat of the moment ; they rushed at one another and fought desperately, one of them going down under the club of the other, who, before he could be interfered with, had swooped down upon his prostrate enemy, gouged his eyes out, and swallowed them, thus disgracing his rival for ever.

Then he suddenly remembered that he was a Christian, and looked round appalled.

I cannot vouch for the truth of this anecdote any more than the other two ; indeed, I doubt it much from all I have seen, amongst native races, of the sincerity and child-like earnestness with which they embrace the benignant tenets of Christianity ; but it goes to show the portion most relished by the Maori.

The Maori and the South Sea Islander make the most sincere converts I have ever seen ; their faith is perfect, and their endurance, under no ordinary trials, for the cause to which they give themselves, is beyond all praise, and reflects the highest credit upon their noble teachers. I am only sorry that, as yet, I cannot say the same for the Papuan ; but then he has no religious belief of his own to start from, which makes the task the harder for the missionaries. They have, as it were, to *create* a faith where there is none. It is much easier to prove the fallacy of a time-worn belief than to build up a spiritism in a born materialistic mind.

The Rev. James Chalmers relates, as the origin of cannibalism in New Guinea, something like a new version of the original temptation and fall of man. As Eve tempted Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit, so the wives of the natives gave them the idea to eat man.

The legend gives it that once, after a successful hunting expedition, when they returned shouting, with their canoes laden with boars, cassowaries and wallabies, their women met them with mockery, crying, 'Is that the dirty stuff you are singing about ; who is going to eat that ?' Then, when the men wondered what they meant, one of them suddenly became inspired with an idea, started up, saying, 'I know what they want : it is man.' Then, casting away their

spoil, they all started to a neighbouring village and brought back ten bodies, but without any shouting as they returned. However, when the wives saw what they had with them this time, they all shouted, 'Yes, yes, that is it; dance and sing now, for you have something worth singing for.'

It is a cruel legend of the gentler sex, and must have been invented by some disappointed native woman-hater; but one thing about it is verified, and that is, the verdict then pronounced—that it was good, and vastly superior to any other flesh, which is the opinion of every New Guinea cannibal of the present day.

The story of the missionary, who tried to convert the cannibal, may be quoted here as evidence. Seeing the native almost convinced by his arguments, and inclined to relinquish the evil habit, he concluded his remarks by saying, 'It is not only very wicked to kill and eat your fellow man, but I am sure it must be very nasty also.'

'Oh, no!' replied the native, pathetically, 'it may be very wicked, but oh! do not say it is nasty.'

The cannibals of New Guinea eat from choice, as do some of the tribes of Central Africa, preferring it to the flesh of any other animal; but the aborigines of North Australia become cannibals only from necessity, and in times of scarcity and dire distress. They are the lowest order of cannibals, and eat their own children to prevent themselves being burdened with a large family—a misfortune to tribes constantly on the move as they are; but they much prefer a dish of white ants, an iguana, or a snake, if they can get it, to this revolting alternative. They are a simple and harmless race, and totally unlike the more ferocious, but wiser and more industrious islanders of the South Seas.

CHAPTER XLII

CAUSES OF MASSACRES

Savage Customs and Superstitions--Laws of Tapu.

IN reading about deeds of native atrocities, such as the murder of Captain James Cook at Hawaii, in the South Seas, or of Captain Marion du Fresne in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, or the more recent records of bloodshed which come from the New Hebrides and New Guinea coasts, it should be borne in mind, as some palliation of those native massacres, that there may be some intricate, yet unaccountable reasons and foregoing causes, which we, from our very imperfect knowledge of the habits of the people, cannot in reason be expected to penetrate.

A few of the causes which do lead up to the punishment of death (for I will not here call it murder when the victim is to be regarded in the aspect of a condemned criminal), I shall endeavour to set forth from my own personal experience of the South Sea Islanders and the Maoris.

The European wanders amongst the savages, unacquainted with their languages, totally ignorant of their customs, and from the moment he puts his foot ashore until he leaves it commits blunder after blunder, as unwittingly as the man not initiated into the mysteries of society may be outraging very important codes, even while he is inwardly congratulating himself that he is doing extremely well, and acting in exactly the same fashion as those around him. If you look in this light upon the intercourse between the stranger and natives, who are more conservative and strict in matters of ceremony than we are, you will get the solution of many a disaster which is put down to the inconsistency of treacherous savages.

Happy the stranger who trusts himself to the care of a friendly guide, who will prevent him from committing any capital offence! The man is blest who has a true gentleman for his friend and host, when he ventures into



A PAPUAN QUEEN

unknown depths in the society to which he has not been used.

When the offender, wittingly or unwittingly, offends society's laws, *if he has not money enough* to carry him through the breach, he is put into 'Coventry'; but with the more direct sons of Nature, who have no alternative or power to make a loophole, if the offence is capital, there can be no chance of *buying off*; the offender is condemned by his own action, as a brother would be condemned, and executed upon the first occasion.

The grand law of Tapu looms up for ever before the stranger, and against this he must not transgress, if he would retain his life, as no influence can save him from the punishment.

This Tapu is a protective law, and to be Tapu is to be sacred; *i.e.*, to touch anything Tapu makes you at once Tapu and deadly to all about you.

To explain my meaning fully:—When Death steps over the threshold he lays the spell of Tapu on the entire house and all within it, the mat on which the body lies, the implements and dishes, &c., which in life he used; whoever ventures past the proscribed limits becomes, as it were, infected with this spell at once sacred and evil.

Those who have become Tapu have the immediate and terrible power of making everything Tapu which they touch or pass over, if left to themselves; and so a person under the ban of Tapu, if ignorant of the evil he carries unconsciously about him, may infect a whole district and lay it waste by simply taking a walk abroad; natives will fly with horror at his approach, and dare not, under peril of being Tapu themselves, pass over the earth which his sacred but devastating feet have trodden. If he takes up a dish, or a stick, it is Tapu, and as virulent as he is himself, so that he becomes a living curse, and something to be removed, as speedily as possible, from the face of the earth.

He must either at once isolate himself, and so remain until the time has elapsed needful to remove the ban, with the ceremonies which require to be gone through, or else be slain.

A native of course knows exactly what to do under the

circumstances ; he will at once remove himself to the place set apart for this purpose, and place himself under the protection of the priests, who alone have the power to take away the evil spirit.

All priests in office are Tapu ; chiefs may act as priests, but are Tapu all the time they are so acting.

To prevent the influence from spreading, and enable the priests to move about, a certain mixture or pigment is prepared and painted over the parts which are in communication with the outer world ; dishes are set apart for the use of the infected party and their attendants, and all the food is cooked inside the sacred circle ; those who have to move about and wait upon the victim are painted from the feet to the waist, while the outer attendants, who have to bring provisions, are coated all over, so that they have no virtue to remove Tapu ; also, although so protected from being made Tapu, they only go to the verge of the limit line, and place their provisions, &c., inside for the more active performers to lift up.

It is a long and tedious quarantine for those who have been imprudent or unfortunate enough to become infected ; if they wish to take the air they are carried on the shoulders of the gaily-painted priests, and never permitted to touch anything while out. A chief, when first elected, is for a time Tapu, and has to be secluded until it can be removed, while those who are engaged in removing the spell have to go through a similar ordeal before they can enter into free intercourse with their fellows, wives, or children. It is only removed by degrees, so that in every tribe there are old men and women devoted to perpetual Tapu, who do no other work, cursed with a fearful isolation, as the disembowellers of ancient Egypt were, gifted with an awful power. The tribe contribute to their support, and they always have work on hand—either a death or a birth, for both events will create Tapu.

Graves are sacred until the corpse is entirely decomposed, after which they must be exorcised, like all land trodden by a Tapu person, before they can be utilised for ordinary purposes.

If, therefore, a priest was at hand and properly painted,

and a stranger to their laws were to transgress and become Tapu, he would first of all try to arrest the dangerous object and persuade him to go at once into quarantine. He would rather do this than kill him; but if an ordinary native were to become aware of it, he would either fly from him to save his own person, or at once, for the sake of his tribe and possessions, make himself also Tapu by killing the transgressor, after which he would place himself under the hands of the working priests; he could have no alternative once the evil was done, no matter how well he liked the victim, unless the victim could understand his explanation of the magnitude of his offence, and obey his directions at once. With a native guide, a stranger would be able to avoid the evil in most cases, only to do so he would find his personal liberty and progress very greatly circumscribed.

If he wanted to take a short cut over the country, his friendly guide would say, 'Not that way.'

'Why?'

'Tapu.'

At every turn the fatal prohibition would start up, until his patience was completely exhausted; then, perhaps, he would daringly push past his guide, and before the other could interfere the deed would be done, and he himself at once doomed to isolation or death.

The guide would make no further objections; probably he would himself be infected by a casual touch, in which case he would follow the other, to watch exactly his route, and note the amount of ruin he was causing. If he could get away he might do so, but, as a rule, he would prefer to incur the infection so that he might report properly the amount of evil done in that fatal walk. If the spot was suitable for a murder, he would unhesitatingly club the offender to limit the mischief; if it was not suitable, he would wait his chance, suffering agonies of consternation at the delay. Love or gratitude could not stay his hand from slaughter; with grief at his heart, he would brain his dearest friend, and weep for him afterwards. This is the exact significance of the word Tapu as nearly as I can explain it in the short space at my present disposal—a ban

more paralysing than excommunication was in the olden times, a curse to be avoided as we avoid the dangers of hydrophobia.

Amongst the Maoris and the natives of the South Sea Islands it was the greatest curse and bar to civilisation, until the mightier influence of Christianity taught them the folly of a superstition so utterly demoralising to social progress or intercourse, and banished the power of an evil witchcraft.

Throughout the islands of the Torres Straits and New Guinea I did not find any trace of this abominable superstition; they had no Tapu, so I had to look out for another cause for the murder of strangers, for, knowing the habits of savages as I do, I could not discover a single act of violence to cause this cruelty on the part of the natives; it must be caused by the instinct of self-preservation or superstition—the direct result of fear, or revenge for a wrong committed.

In New Zealand Captain Cook was badly received on his first visit, before the natives learnt that his purpose was good-will and peace towards them; and they afterwards confessed they were terribly afraid of this strange appearance, and it was the desperation of fear which roused their resentment; they all expected to be killed and devoured by this monster flying-fish, as they thought the ship 'Endeavour' to be, and tried, by combining their forces, to kill it first.

Brave to utter recklessness, the Maoris have always shown themselves to be shrewd and not easily deceived, yet I have always found them generous and noble towards those who can understand their nature. Their first greeting of Captain Cook and his party certainly displayed their pluck, if not the amicable side of their nature. Four men, with lances only, rushed out of the woods to attack the pinnace and yawl, both filled with armed men; two volleys fired over their startled heads did not daunt them. Yet that gunpowder-report must have sounded awful when heard for the first time by these four plucky savages who dared to tackle two boatloads of fire-eaters, and their first fears were fully realised by the third volley, which shot one of the four through the heart.

So death preceded Captain Cook on the New Zealand coast, and the great discoverer made himself Tapu the moment he first put his foot ashore, when he handled the body which his coxswain had slain.

'Upon *examining* the body we found that he had been shot through the heart,' &c.

Knowing what we do now about their laws, we do not wonder that he was badly received all round the coast, and warned from it after this, on that first visit. We only marvel that he was not slaughtered long before.

No one who has read the records left by this truly wonderful navigator, can think of him otherwise than as a most sagacious, far-seeing, and kind-hearted man, the *beau ideal* of a brave and generous sailor, just commander and powerful leader; nor can we blame him in any way for the unfortunate disaster which occurred on his first visit to the Maoris. His experiences amongst those softer natives, the Otaheiteans, ill-prepared him to deal with the sterner cannibals of this more stormy land; he had been greeted at Otaheite by plantains, the natives there having already had some experience of white men from the former visit of Captain Wallis, who must have treated them kindly when they were so ready to make friends of Captain Cook and his party; the after-visitors always reap the benefit, or pay the penalty of their predecessors, but with the Maoris it was altogether different—their natures were as totally different from the Otaheiteans as was their climate.

Over Taheta the ocean breeze wafts balmily, and the coral-protected waters are seldom ruffled. The natives are gentle and trusting as children, and make splendid, long-suffering missionaries; their diet is mostly fruit, and they have little necessity for war.

But the Maori is a different specimen of manhood, having a stern education in warfare, trained by necessity to pluck his food from his enemy, as were the hardy and needy Bordermen of Scotland in the Gothic times, with greater reasoning powers and more suspicion, as well as hardier in their natures and not so impulsive as natives of the colder climates are liable to be. The South Sea Islanders could be enraged at a moment's notice and conciliated the

next, forgetting the offence as they forgot the benefit; but the Maori required to be roused up by his war-song before he could fight, and once roused was not easily appeased; slow and deadly in his wrath, and as unforgiving toward the enemy as a Scotchman, the effect of that fatal shot would not be forgotten in a hurry.

Afterwards Captain Cook made friends of these suspicious savages; possibly when they came to understand his purpose and appreciate the benefits to be derived from the intercourse, they consented to condone the offence of killing, seeing that he abstained from disgracing the friends of the victims, for with the Maoris the killing of a man is not so serious a fault as the utter disgrace which eating him would be, cannibalism in the first instance being originated in the desire to degrade the enemy, for it was an insult not to be forgiven for a Maori to say, 'Ha! ha!! my father baked your father's head.' In that case the descendants were reduced to the level of slaves, to the fifth and sixth generations, a stain which could only be wiped out by returning the ghastly compliment.

Possibly, in view of the future benefits to be derived, the priests during Captain Cook's absence purified him by ceremonies and a substitute from the effect of Tapu, probably killing and eating an enemy in his name, and so were open to receive his friendly advances upon his return. I can think of no other reason to explain why he and his men were even permitted to land again upon the coast. Be that as it may, he came and left New Zealand, and the natives had cause to bless his memory in their droves of pigs and fields of kimira—*i.e.*, potatoes.

Before taking up the close of this useful life at Hawaii, I would glance at the other great murder which occurred on this coast—that of Captain Marion—and attempt to explain it on the premises which I have taken up.

Between Captain Cook's first and second visits the 'Mascarin' put in at the Bay of Islands, along with the 'Castries,' May 11, 1772.

Two years before the landing of Captains Marion and Crozet a relation of the chief Takowii had been carried away against his free will by Surville, an injury which the



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Maori was bound to revenge on the first European arrival, for death would have been a less injury than this disgrace brought upon the tribe. Good cause No. 1 why the unfortunate successor to the wrong-doer Surville should be slain and his body outraged.

Thirty-five days they lived in friendly intercourse with the natives, who, shy at first, vied with each other at last in showing kindness to the strangers.

Many attribute their conduct to cold-blooded calculation and treachery during those thirty-five days of kindly attention, but from many little incidents, I incline to the belief that the intelligent Takowii had given up all thoughts of revenge. He had plenty of opportunities of snaring the sailors during that interval.

On May 23 Captain Marion examined the interior, and discovered a forest of splendid cedars; it was not in this tour that he transgressed, for the natives still lived in close intimacy with the seamen.

On June 8 he was made a chief, on the 12th he organised a fishing party, and went off to Takowii's pah, and was seen no more alive.

'Takowii killed Marion.' Why? Out of revenge for the loss of his relative and to wipe out the disgrace from his tribe? A fair enough reason from a Maori standpoint, yet he did not require to wait thirty-five days to encompass this act of retribution; indeed, from a Maori standpoint the sooner he took his revenge the greater the *éclat*; but from the story of Turner, who witnessed the affair, I draw my conclusions thus.

Takowii had a wrong to avenge on the white man, but Marion had become his friend, so he reserved his retribution for the next arrival, in whom he might feel less personal interest. His fishing invitation was given in all good faith, but between the shore and the pah was Tapued ground, which the impetuous Frenchman stepped upon before he could be warned or prevented by his Maori friends; then Takowii had his duty and his revenge to perform in one act, and the thirty-five days' friendship had to be obliterated. Marion was doomed.

The savages rushed forward and lifted the Frenchmen

upon their shoulders (they would have permitted them to walk if they had not become Tapu), and in a moment they clubbed and speared them. They bore them into Tapued ground and slaughtered them before they could devastate the untapued lands.

It was an act of duty done upon the instant of the offence, with a dormant old grudge paid off at the same time, and not the premeditated atrocity which some writers lay upon the shoulders of this grand race of now almost extinct savages.

To return to the final act in the life of Captain Cook at Hawaii in Honolulu, in which there can be traced no wicked motive, as he had inspired the natives with only respect and affection, and after the execution they all united, even the executioners, in a universal wail of sorrowful regret, as Abraham might have done had he sacrificed his well-beloved son.

Cook wrote on his last pages: 'I never met with a behaviour so free from reserve and suspicion, in my intercourse with any tribe of savages, as we experienced in the people of this island. It is also to be observed to their honour that they never once attempted to cheat us in exchanges or to commit a theft.'

For two months and a half they continued in the best possible relations with each other; indeed Captain Cook, or 'Lord' as the natives called him, had been venerated as a deity, as has been described by Captain King.

He says: 'The ships being in great want of fuel, Captain Cook desired me on February 2 to treat with the *priests* for the purchase of the rail that surrounded the top of the *morai* (i.e., sacred or Tapu house). I must confess I had at first some doubt about the decency of this proposal, and was apprehensive that even the bare mention of it might be considered by them as a piece of shocking impiety.'

Captain King, from his knowledge of the strictness of Tapu, felt the impropriety of this order of Captain Cook, who appears at this stage to have lost his usual keen sense of justice and gift of adaptation; possibly he was blinded by the excessive freedom and friendliness of his dusky friends, and felt that he could take this liberty on the strength of his new position as a deity; and from the priests

not exhibiting any surprise or indignation at the request, it is just possible that they were also, for the moment, dazzled by their veneration, but the reaction was soon to come. They gave the wood readily, without ever stipulating for anything in return; they also assisted the sailors in the sacrilege, being resigned even to the taking away for fire-wood of one of their carved images.

Kavo, the priest, on being spoken to by King, stipulated for the restoration of the image, which, when obtained, he carried into one of the priests' houses.

So far had Cook, in his taking, only acted up to his new character as a god; but the unexpected restoration of the image was the first false step. To the native idea, a god might be rapacious and cruel, but he must not be inconsistent; by giving back the idol, he proved that he had been offending a deity whose power he owned superior, since he feared it enough to pause at destroying the centre image, although he had not paused at the spoliation of the temple.

They would naturally reason in this fashion:—‘This god intends going away before the other god has learnt what he has done, leaving us to suffer from his vengeance.’

Then they became very inquisitive about the time of the departure, and Captain King took some pains to satisfy them and himself as to their motive for asking, but as yet they were evidently in too great a state of awe to explain their fears and growing suspicions.

At the night talks hints would be thrown out as to why ‘Lord’ Cook feared this other god so much, and if after all they had not been imposed upon, and might have to suffer in consequence.

I must blame Captain Cook that he, in the first place, permitted himself to be deified, and that he did not imitate St. Paul at Corinth, and try to enlighten them as to the true God when he had the opportunity. It gave him for a short time a fictitious power, which, when he lost the prestige, placed him at the mercy of an imposed-upon and outraged enemy; their hatred was intensified by the former kindness which had been misplaced and trifled with.

It took some days to awaken them, during which their kindness continued seemingly unabated; still, that they

were watching the strangers and testing them, is proved by the invitation which Terreeboo gave them on the 3rd of February, when the people brought their presents to their own king instead of to the newly-found god. 'If he is really a god, he will be angry that our king is placed before him.' Captain Cook did not express any anger at the preference, and appeared satisfied with what the chief gave him out of his own leavings; if a god, he was a very paltry god, of less account than their chief—so from veneration they had progressed to suspicion and silent contempt; the rest became easy and natural.

The same day the charm of Tapu was removed from their lodgings and themselves, and they were delivered into the hands of the natives.

On the 5th, the weather becoming rough, the natives left them, but left on board their women, who became seasick and much dissatisfied.

Then the weather became worse, and we can fancy the natives attributing the disasters which this storm caused amongst their canoes to a foretaste of the vengeance of the god whom this impostor had outraged.

'Towards the evening of the 13th the officer who commanded the watering-party of the "Discovery" came to inform me that several chiefs had assembled at the well near the beach, drawing away the natives, whom he had hired to assist the sailors in rolling down the casks to the shore. He told me that he thought their behaviour extremely suspicious, and that they meant to cause a disturbance.'

A marine is sent ashore, and things become worse, the natives grow tumultuous and arm themselves with stones, but upon King, who appeared to be a favourite, speaking to the chiefs, they are permitted to get the casks filled; and, having quieted matters so far, he goes to meet Captain Cook, who is coming ashore, and who on hearing the disturbance, orders ball to be used by the sentinels, instead of small shot, if any repetition of the trouble takes place.

It is now open warfare between the natives and the seamen; a state of matters to be expected after the reaction from the former hero-worship.

Shortly after this they were alarmed by the firing of muskets from the 'Discovery,' directed at a canoe; and supposing it to be a case of theft, gave pursuit into the woods after the fugitive without success. The natives now began to amuse themselves by fooling the pursuers with false information; the goods had either already been restored, or, what was more likely, never taken. During the absence of Captains Cook and King a more serious difference had happened. One of the officers had taken upon himself to seize the canoe of Pareea, while this chief was on board the 'Discovery,' and instead of giving it up when Pareea asked for it, he knocked the chief down with a violent blow on the head with an oar, upon which the Islanders, hitherto peaceable spectators, attacked the crew of the pinnace, and but for the timely interposition of the injured chief, would have demolished them. So far as we read, the Europeans, by a most deplorable series of mistakes, were the aggressive party, and the Islanders had displayed great forbearance under their injuries. Captain Cook certainly had not acted with his ordinary prudence or humanity, for when he heard this last incident, which certainly redounded more to the credit of Pareea than of the officer who assaulted him, he said, 'I am afraid these people will oblige me to use some violent measures, for they must not be left to imagine that they have gained an advantage over us.'

During the night the cutter of the 'Discovery' was found missing, and Captain Cook prepared to go ashore and capture the chief man, taking with him his double-barrelled gun loaded with ball—his usual system for recovering stolen property. Reaching Kowrowa, with his lieutenant and nine marines, he invited the king to come on board the 'Resolution,' to which the king readily assented, and got up to accompany him. He was not permitted to go, however, for some of the lesser chiefs, with his favourite wife, used force to keep the king back when he was inclined to accompany Captain Cook, until, what between the urging of the one party and the insisting of the other, the poor king was left in a most dejected state of fear. At the moment when he would have given in, the climax was reached, for the tidings came that the seamen had killed a chief of the first rank.

What followed was rapid, decisive, and blood-curdling; the women and children hurried from the scene, while the men rushed for their war-mats and spears, and, arming themselves with stones, closed round the doomed men.

Captain Cook fired his first barrel at the leader as he came on flourishing his *pahooah* with savage yells. The first shot did no more harm than to irritate the enemy; then he fired his second barrel and killed his man, drawing the first blood in the fray, and leaving himself defenceless in the midst of a maddened crowd.

Four of the marines were slaughtered while retreating to the rocks, three more dangerously wounded, and the lieutenant stabbed between the shoulders.

Captain Cook was last seen by those in the boats, standing on the shore shouting for his crew to come to his rescue, while he faced the natives. They, the natives, hung back, as if still half-afraid of the sham divinity which he had weakly allowed them to hedge him with; but, as he turned from them to give his orders to the boats, the rush was made, a quick stab in the back, and he fell face downwards in the water.

Then, like the assassins of Cæsar, they plunged upon the poor body, dragging it ashore, and snatching at the weapons which made the first wound and showed how mortal he was, and each one vied with the other in their savage eagerness to share in his destruction.

So perished one of England's greatest commanders, and most excellent of men, who was so far fortunate in that he lived to finish the work entrusted to him. He was regretted and lamented by all the sailors who had good cause to love him, and by the Islanders, who had cut him off, after their just rancour had passed away, and they could think upon the man whom they had received with generous friendship, and not the impostor who had permitted them to think that he was a god, and who, by profaning their temple and their Tapu, had condemned himself to death.

CHAPTER XLIII

NEW GUINEA

A General Survey of New Guinea—Its Possibilities, &c.

NEW GUINEA, the largest island in the world, is being forced upon our notice more and more every day by the conflicts between natives and Europeans. The noble abnegation of the missionaries, who so frequently fall victims in their efforts to make peace between the offended Papuan and the acquisitive adventurer, the appalling stories of outrage and cannibalism, and the vague rumours which float towards England of vast possibilities and wealth in future to be gleaned from these coral-bound shores, tempt me to tell you what I know about it.

During this present tour throughout Australasia I went over the British portion of New Guinea, and besides, had the good fortune of being fellow-passenger from Cook Town to Brisbane with Dr. Knappe, who had just returned from his country's portion of this land of wonders; so that while I had the advantage of seeing from Motu Motu to East Cape on the southern side of the island, I likewise had the benefit of his experience of the northern side.

I did not go to New Guinea as a geological, botanical or geographical explorer, but rather in my capacity of artist and author, to observe the people and their ordinary habits, to learn how they built their houses, and cut their canoes, ornaments and general utensils, what they occupied themselves with on working-days, and the amusements which filled up their leisure hours; how they looked and talked amongst themselves, what ideas they had of this life and the future state, their myths and legends, if any, and whatever else I could find out personally about them and their comparatively unknown land.

As I had the honour to be the first, and I believe, as yet, the only *painter* who has travelled in New Guinea, I was particular to see and sketch as much as I possibly could in the limited time at my disposal, every moment of daylight being utilised. Favoured as I was by fair weather and

happy circumstances, I missed very little of the coast-land from the Papuan Gulf to the top of Milne Bay. The Owen Stanley ranges indulged me with exceptionally clear views of their wonderfully lofty and rugged peaks; the owners of the land were universally kind and friendly; the missionaries and traders helped me when they could, and, best of all, I escaped the greatest of dangers to venturesome travellers in these parts—the New Guinea fever—so that I was able to return to England with my sketch and note books literally crammed full of work.

While going round the country I kept my eyes open and my pencil busy. By making a great number of rapid sketches I did not require to write down many observations, beyond the names of places, distances and heights, with a few touches of local colouring, so that I was able to carry away far more vivid impressions of the country than I could have done with pages of word-memoranda; which is, I consider, a decided advantage to a traveller, when going over a hot country where every extra package becomes an incumbrance. A light suit of pyjamas, my pencils, and one or two small note-books sufficed for my purpose, and I think did me better service than a dozen of carriers could have done. I went amongst the natives lightly clad, and feeling hardly any inconvenience from the heat.

Before going, I took great care not to read any works already written about the country, as I did not desire to carry away any preconceived notions or theories of other travellers. I wanted to take away with me only my own ideas of what the people were, and what the country was like, intending to compare, by reading when I got back, my own theories and the notions of those who had gone before me; so that when I saw the first savage, I was utterly ignorant of his peculiarities beyond having a vague notion that he had a taste for eating strangers, but whether raw or roasted I was not in the slightest degree aware.

With the usual egotism of Europeans, I thought that of course he would naturally prefer my flesh, as the representative of dainty refinement; however, like many other insular conceits, I quickly discovered that in this I had been

flattering myself, and woke to my mistake with a feeling of humiliation. I found out that the Papuan prefers many kinds of food to a white man; for instance, the pig is much more to his taste, while a Chinaman is a real delicacy. As for the white man, he is only to be endured when there is nothing else to be had; so I suppose to the contempt of the natives I may attribute my indemnity from danger while with them.

Years ago, when sojourning with the Maoris, I had learnt that their human feasts were not so much the outcome of flesh-lust as the desire for revenge, and in order to degrade, in an effectual manner, the relations of their victims. The descendants of a man who had been devoured could not take rank as Toas or warriors—they were degraded for several generations to the levels of outcasts and slaves; still, I have heard an old tattooed fighting-man revel in the memory of these olden feasts, and say that man-flesh was better than pig; so that one of my earliest investigations amongst the cannibals of New Guinea was to find out if religion or revenge held an equal prominence in their feasts. I found out that revenge made them, in most cases, kill, but relish alone ruled the roast—religion holds a very slight place in their esteem.

They have their superstitions, that is, they believe in bodes and omens, evil eyes and witchcraft, and practise a kind of spiritualism, having mediums and *séances*, when masks are set up like hobgoblins, before which they tremble and appear terribly afraid while the performance is going on; but I could never believe in the reality of their horror, as they are quite ready to handle the hobgoblins, and sell them for a few sticks of tobacco to the first stranger who comes to them, so that they cannot regard these masks as any other than what they are—painted and carved bits of wood. They believe also in ghosts, but do not appear to trouble themselves in the smallest degree about Ghostland.

When a man dies, he is dead to his friends for ever. If he has a ghost they are very anxious to chase it as far away as possible, and content themselves with utilising his mortal relics as far as they can, making necklaces of

his smaller bones, prow-ornaments of his skull, the larger bones being transformed into lime-spoons or daggers. The remains of a relative are used in pretty much the same way as those of an enemy, so that in this they differ totally from the Maori, their descendants incurring no disgrace because some ancestor may have been roasted.

In speaking about New Guinea native customs, it must be strictly remembered that every few miles the natives have a different custom of betrothal, marriage, burial, and even language. A general belief, or rather non-belief in a future world, prevails over all. The missionary, when he preaches to them, has first to create a want before he can fill it up with his glorious promises. They do not aspire beyond this life, and their precautions are all taken for the guarding of the present state of things. Now, with a thorough-going idol-worshipper the work is comparatively easy, for he has his spiritual wants and cravings already generated, to which they administer, substituting a better heaven than the hereafter which he has already been taught by tradition to regard as an object of life; but with the Papuans, who have no soul-aspirations, and who are the most thoroughbred materialists going, he has difficulties innumerable. Therefore the results which have been gained by such men as MacFarlane, Chalmers, Scott and Savage are the more wonderful with such a nation.

Every native of New Guinea goes to bed with his war implements handy, and sleeps warily. These missionaries have taught him that if he shows mercy to his enemy he will make his enemy do likewise, so eventually he flings down his arms, and sleeps soundly without dread, and common sense brings him over in no time.

Teach him also that burying his dead in front of his house, with only palm-leaves as a covering, is the cause of the fevers and mortality amongst his tribe, and that there is no other evil influence at work, and in time he will abandon this most pernicious practice.

At Port Moresby they have not yet succeeded in instilling the importance of sanitary laws, but they have taught them the value of living without war, so that the other will follow in good time; then, when the excitement of war and the

troubles of disease have departed, and when the active-minded native is satisfied in all that pertains to this life, will he crave for the something beyond.

As I found the natives of New Guinea, they were industrious, artistic and moral in their habits, regarding their women with affection and respect, sharing the daily labour, ready to adapt themselves to the customs of the stranger, if those customs were in any way an improvement upon their own, and with general tastes simple and natural.

As cannibals they are not ferocious, having about the same taste for a human breast-piece as we have for a rump-steak; they do not gorge as the Maori did, but eat only to satisfy their hunger, whether the food be pig, human flesh, wallaby, fish, or yams; they are great tobacco-smokers and betel-chewers, which latter they use as a preventive for fever; but they have not yet acquired the taste, nor do I think they ever will, for the fire-water of the Europeans. I do not think it possible that a nation such as this, which indulges in no excess of eating, will soon be exterminated by strong drink.

I wish now to take New Guinea as a future field for planters, gold-seekers and agriculturists, and from what I saw in my short visit I consider it not only possible, but as having every feature to recommend it, if so be that we utilise the natives instead of exterminating them. I consider that no other native labour can be of use except that of the Papuan himself, in the same sense that I regard the eucalyptus as the best tree and future source of wealth for Australia.

As I travelled through Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, to my regret I saw miles of country covered with dead gum trees—miles with the bare white trunks rearing up like gigantic and fantastic tombstones over vast graveyards, trees ringed and rendered useless by selectors and squatters, who thought only of the grass and earth, plucking out and destroying the wealth which Nature had provided to their hands, in order to secure a competence by hard work and uncertain results.

In New Guinea the natives still wait unmolested, on our

side of the Astrolabe, but they wait to be educated as helpers who will grow rich while they enrich their teachers, or, like the gum trees of Australia, to be cut down or left to die unutilised.

I had no opportunity of going to the German side of the land, but, as we travelled on that return journey from Thursday Island to Brisbane, Dr. Knappe, who is the German Consul at Samoa, kindly gave me much information regarding the doings of his countrymen there. He had explored the Augusta River, and found splendid land on both sides of it, the river itself being safe for traffic for over 400 miles. Down this they can transmit their timber and produce, and they have begun in earnest to people the country. He did not say how they got on with the natives, but as they have taken possession of the land, I do not suppose that they will trouble greatly about negotiating with the original owners, except by means of their gunpowder. Now my own estimate of the Papuans leads me to conclude that they will not submit to force. Each native has his own private property: there is not a fruit-tree standing which has not an owner, nor an inch of land which can be taken without resentment; therefore I believe that the natives on the German land will be exterminated. Dr. Knappe informed me that he and his party had excellent health while there; that there was less fever, and of a milder form, than on the British side; yet for all that, I do not think that any European can work and live in New Guinea, whether on the German or English lands, any more than a European can work and live in Java or Ceylon.

I am of opinion, however, that a European can live and enjoy health in New Guinea by taking the same precautions that he would in Java or Ceylon; that is, if he directs the native labour and is prepared to pay out and reap the benefit, dealing fairly with the natives, and employing them instead of trying to subdue them, or force them off the ground.

The Germans are sending out emigrants by shiploads, paying them a salary for staying on the ground. From what I have seen of the German emigrant, I do not think that

there is a better colonist alive, excepting, perhaps, the Chinaman, yet I doubt if the Germans will make any good of the country. Working wrongly, as I believe they are doing, they will die off wholesale, and so at the present time I regard German New Guinea as only a graveyard, until they learn to buy from the natives their labour, and rest content with this result.

The Papuan already has all the instincts for work :—he has his rest-days and his days for fishing-pot and canoe-making, building, gardening, spinning. He does not wear clothes because he does not feel the want of costume, but he embellishes his house, paddles, canoes, lakatoes and weapons ; everyone has his duty to do, and he does it, in New Guinea. I found as much real work going on as I had left in England, not the hurry and bustle perhaps, because there was no necessity, but something rather like an ideal England according to John Ruskin, without steam-engines or coal-smoke.

The Papuan has his house of council where the men meet to discuss the welfare of the tribe, while the women attend to the household wants ; he can enjoy a joke, be cynical, or earnest, while as a business man I do not suppose he can be well beaten when he knows the value of things, and he jumps to that discernment with a very rapid bound.

Formerly I used to think that the Maori was of the lost tribes of Israel, from the keenness with which he could drive a bargain, although hospitable as a Jew after the bargain was concluded ; but now I think the Papuan has a keener instinct for trade than the Maori, therefore I consider him before even the sons of Judah in that respect, and expect great future possibilities from him in consequence.

He has also a keen sense of honour and probity. At Gilé-Gilé I saw this displayed in a case of theft, by a white man, of hens which were left under the charge of the native chief by the missionaries ; our party tried to prove that the fowl were his from being abandoned, but he could not endorse this logic—he considered that they were his in trust only, and stuck to his idea of right and wrong. This I speak more fully about later on.

The Papuan has also a most apt and quick mind to learn from strangers. At Hula one of the natives learnt the chorus of a song in one singing, air and words, and sung it afterwards correctly, without aid.

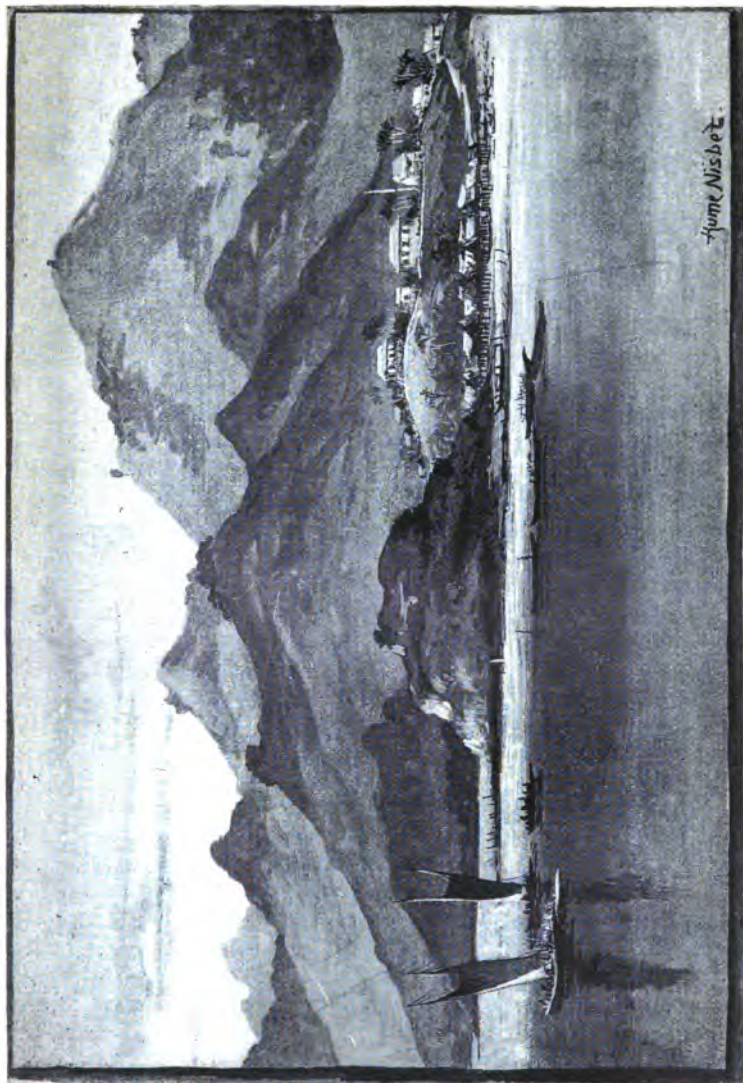
Also, at Moresby one of the Brothers Hunter showed me a native drawing of a horse, brought from inland. One of the inland tribes had seen him pass on horseback, and from the hasty glance supposing it to be some new animal, made horse and rider as one beast with five legs; any one could see, however, what the artist meant. These are both trifles of themselves, yet are full of significance of future results, for the native who can learn four lines of a song with its air at one hearing and remember it afterwards, or reproduce so nearly correctly an object which he has seen only once rushing past, is possessed of an intellect capable of mastering anything in the system of civilisation.

CHAPTER XLIV

THE LAND QUESTION

A General Survey of New Guinea (*continued*).

THE question now comes to be: How much must these so-called savages be taught by Englishmen before it is worth an Englishman's while to go amongst them in order to gain an easy competence? I would reply to that, no more than it would take to teach a Saxon labourer accustomed only to tilling the ground, if a manufacturer planted a mill in his district, or opened a coal mine, and make him adroit as a mill-worker or a miner. Less effort, I think, would be required to teach the clear-headed Papuan than it takes to drive the simplest idea into the befogged, beer-soaked brains of the majority of Saxon labourers. From what I have experienced as yet, I would rather fix the standard comparison of brain-power and reasoning capabilities as about equal in the Papuan at present and a labouring native of Scotland; in fact, the New Guinea native resembles this latter more than any other in his independence, self-



MISSION HOUSE, PORT MORESBY, NEW GUINEA



reliance, and quickness at taking offence, but has a much greater love of home and country.

Putting the cannibal propensities aside (which will shortly be shamed out, and which have not the same significance to travellers who have lived with cannibals that the empty sounds have to people who live at home), the Papuan is no more to be regarded as a savage than the native of India or China, much less than the African in his native state, or the American Indian. To me, he is several degrees higher in the social scale than the lower level of British subjects; it is an easier task to make a companion of a New Guineaite than it is to do so with our own home clodhoppers, the first having already in activity the instincts of right and wrong, which I fail to find in the majority of the latter.

At Teste Island, which I will describe presently, I met a trader who is working on the right system with the natives. He has gone amongst them as a friend and employer. I found his station in first-class working order, and the owners of the island working willingly under his direction and producing splendid results. He acts as their physician when sickness overtakes any of them, and as magistrate to settle their disputes, by native choice. It is a model trading station, as he is a model trader. If a few hundred men of his stamp settled out there, what missionaries like Messrs. Macfarlane, Chalmers and Vergus have begun so well might become an accomplished fact.

I would not like to be misunderstood when speaking about the Germans in their connection with New Guinea, or lead you to think that I regard them as one degree more remorseless than the British would be, and have been, in their dealings with natives, for I do not. I consider the German, as a colonist, to be as industrious and kind-hearted a man as any Englishman can be; but as regards New Guinea, I do think that they have no business to be there, and I think that our Government did both a foolish and a selfish stroke of policy when it weakly permitted this nation to take possession of the northern quarter of that land.

I think, in the first place, that it was our duty to protect the other half of the country as the Queensland Government

desired at the time, and permit no other Power, either French or German, to land, except as British subjects under the control of the officials appointed by our Government for the protection of the original owners. But having allowed this prize to slip through their fingers, I hold it to be doubly foolish, under the guise of this protection, to throw all sorts of impediments in the way of adventuring traders who risk their lives in order that they may deal with the natives, while at the same moment the German landowners are being paid instead of being extra-taxed.

To quote an instance of how men are discouraged at present on our side of the Astrolabe Mountains, I met a trader from Melbourne, at Thursday Island, who had gone in search of cedar up one of the rivers in the Papuan Gulf. He had employed native labour and secured his cargo at considerable personal risk, with a vast outlay of time; when he reached Thursday Island he was not allowed to go on until he had paid a new tax about which he knew nothing when outward bound, a heavy tax of so much per foot on the cargo of wood. He had before him the long and uncertain voyage round North-Western and South Australia before reaching his destination, Port Phillip, where he would again be taxed before he would be allowed to land his cargo, by the Victoria Government.

It was his first voyage to New Guinea, and he declared it would be his last, as, before he got his cedar home, taking all the expenses and waste of time into consideration, to compete with the market price he would be a heavy loser. The cedar he said was good, but of an inferior quality to the American cedar, while he could sail quicker over to America, and have less duty to pay, for a superior cargo.

I will now touch upon the country as it affects strangers. While I progressed towards Torres Straits all the people who had not been there constantly warned me about its extreme unhealthiness, and told me to prepare to leave my bones there, and the nearer I approached to my goal the more gloomy became the evil croakings; but the few traders and pearl-fishers whom I met and who had coasted the land, without exception flouted the idea of its being more

unhealthy than any other virgin tropical country, so I did not pay much heed to the croakers.

Personally, while there I enjoyed my ordinary health; but then I took small doses of quinine as a tonic before each meal, kept myself always busy and on the move, slept on board whenever I could do so, and always avoided the night damps.

But I must admit that at present the land is unhealthy on the low parts for any one careless in his habits, although not more so than any other new, unworked tropical land would be; and the causes are quite apparent to any one who has been there.

There are swampy and mangrove-covered flats all round the coast, which require to be drained and cleared before any one can expect health. From all virgin soils there exude gases fatal to human life, which escape when the land has been once turned over. The mountains rise abruptly and to a great height, with deep valleys where the waters congregate and rot the vegetation, the decayed *débris* of which has been accumulating for ages in some parts untouched—a wealth of natural manure which only requires to be utilised in order to produce splendid results to the future planter, and which can only be utilised, without risk, by the nations who are already acclimatised, for the poor South Sea Islanders, who are there as teachers, suffer as much as do the Europeans.

By day the sea-breezes blow strongly inland and then there is no danger, but at night the wind veers round and returns from the mountains, bringing down to the valleys and hollows white, vegetable germ-laden, malarial fogs, and these are the hours when strangers, glad of the coolness of the night after the heat of the day, carelessly go to sleep under outside verandahs and get inoculated with New Guinea fever.

On the heights, however, it is always healthy, winter or summer, and also out at sea; therefore the inland tribes build their villages on mountains, ridges, and tree-tops, and the coast tribes in many cases raise theirs on high piles out on the reefs, half a mile or a mile from the shore; their gardens and plantations are on the flats, but they

live themselves, when they can, on a level above the mist-line.

At Port Moresby, one of the least picturesque and most unwholesome places along the coast, I saw some of the white men's residences lying on a lower plain than the native huts. Mr. Andrew Goldie has built his house on what I consider to be about the worst part of the bay. He lives where he is surrounded by the night fogs, and has the day breezes poisoned by the constant fumes from native graves, so that he is a victim to repeated attacks of fever, which is not at all to be wondered at.

The Mission Station is better placed, much better than even the Government Bungalow, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawes appear to enjoy good health; and from what I have seen of the country, if any white man can live at Port Moresby he need have no fear about squatting upon any other part of New Guinea.

In order to comprehend the capabilities of this land, I will now say a few words about its formation.

From Caution Bay to Table Bay the British coast-line is protected by a wide fringe of coral reefs ranging from four to eight miles wide, with good openings very conveniently placed at almost regular distances from each other, within which the largest vessels may, with perfect safety, enter and find good anchorage; these disconnections occur at the mouths of the large freshwater rivers which lead inland to the vast chain of backbone mountains called the Owen Stanley Range. Such are the Basilisk Passage at Port Moresby, Round Head Passage, Beagle Entrance, Hood Lagoon, opposite Kerepuna one of the most important native towns, with rich flatlands behind. Between the Aroma and Ammarupa districts is a stretch of growing district over twenty miles in width, and spreading from Keremu to the Robinson River in Cloudy Bay, over ninety miles in length, well drained, and watered by rivers and streams throughout.

Again, from Cloudy Bay to the North Foreland in China Straits, there is a fine spread of diversified land—forest, swamp and plains, with occasional mountain land—over 150 miles in extent, and ranging from 15 to 30 miles in width.

Westward, from Caution Bay to Bald Head, a distance of over 180 miles, we find the same description of land ; after which, from the rivers Fly, Baxter, and so on, to the Dutch boundary, it is flat and swampy, well cut up by rivers, some of great volume and extent, as those lately discovered and named the Douglas and Jubilé, by Mr. Theodore Beven, who was sent out at the private expense of Messrs. Burns, Philp & Co., of Sydney, in the interest of future trade.

The country east of Port Moresby has been fairly gone over by the Rev. James Chalmers and other able explorers, but much of that lying west has yet to be explored. Mr. Beven sends glorious news of what he has explored, and considers the new rivers to be the future gateways to the interior. He penetrated far inland in the same steamer, 'Victory,' which I used while over there, and passed some most stupendous gorge scenery, as well as fine level stretches of rich land ; all the party enjoyed, as I did, good health.

After getting past the coast belt of mangrove forests, the country opens up—in parts grass-covered, and in parts densely wooded—the timber being in some parts of gigantic size—cedar, camphor, nutmeg, mahogany, tamarind and other denizens of the tropical forest. Some of the bush-tracks are very difficult to penetrate owing to the dense undergrowth, but in other places the ground is more open, large spaces of grass-covered country, with, here and there, cotton and gum trees breaking the monotony. In these open spaces the wallaby and bush turkey are to be found plentifully.

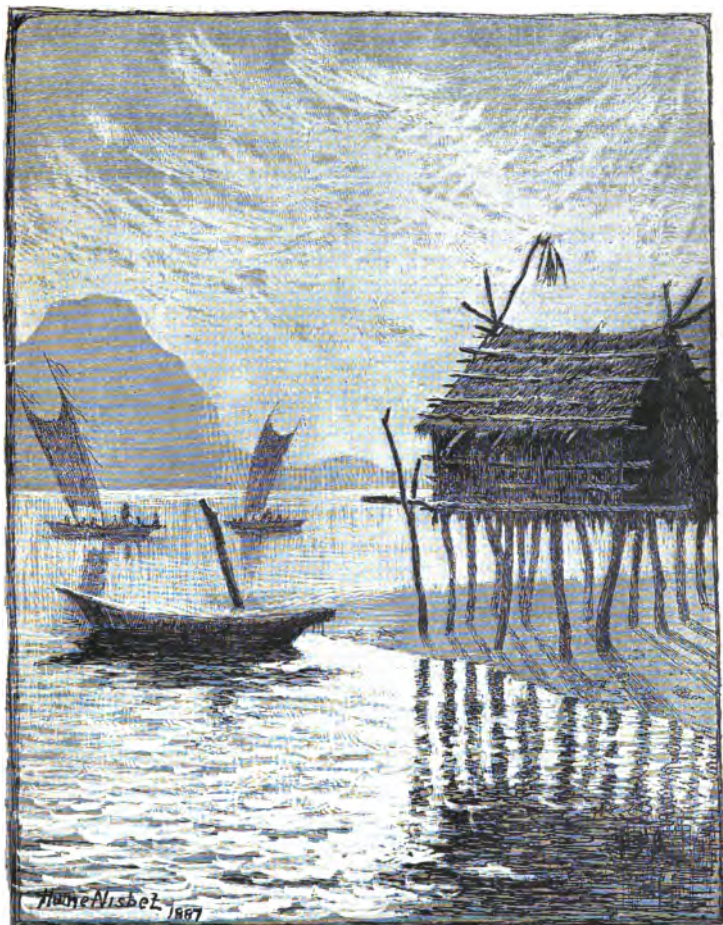
The specimens of the eucalyptus which I came across in New Guinea were not to be compared to the gum trees of Australia ; but this is owing to the heat, as there are no trees north of Brisbane to be compared to the giants of Gippsland and Tasmania.

On the mountains the natives cultivate the ground right to the top, making terraces and ridges to prevent their gardens from being washed away by the rains. Round by East Cape the appearance of those garden-ringed hills reminds one strongly of the cultivated mountain ranges of Ceylon.

Crotons and orchids are to be found in great variety and beauty all over the island, and there is a very rich harvest to be gleaned by any future botanist who may wish to make a name for himself and find out novelties in the vegetable world.

It is also ridiculous to suppose that a country so closely connected with the gold-bearing continent of Australia, and in many respects so similar in geological formation, will not yet yield a heavy return in minerals and ore, both in alluvial and quartz form; specimens have been picked up by nearly every traveller who has spent any time in the country. That the natives themselves have not discovered gold, or used it in any of their ornaments, is no evidence, as it needs a *certain kind* of civilised taste to be acquired before this metal can be appreciated. I saw myself some specimens in the possession of a trader whose word I had no cause to doubt, particularly as he has discarded all other means of gaining a livelihood, and is devoting himself altogether to New-Guinea gold-seeking. He is working alone and quietly, as he wishes to find enough to remunerate himself sufficiently before divulging his knowledge to the world at large. Personally I have no desire to see a rush of miscellaneous gold-hunters on the field, before the rights of the original owners are fully recognised and themselves protected. I am hoping for better results to be gleaned out of the soil than can be dug from under it, for a gold-field, however prosperous it may be, is a dreary sight to contemplate. I would much rather see New Guinea transformed into a planters' paradise, with contented natives tilling and reaping the ground, than a miserable waste of upturned earth, crushed quartz, and drinkingshanties, with the exhibition of unbridled lust of gain which all newly-discovered diggings display, and where the worst passions which can degrade mankind seem to be let loose. Rather than this should come to pass, I would prefer to see the land locked up as it now is, and left in the undisturbed possession of the missionaries and their converts.

I would like now to speak of the natives as I found them during my visit, and show you as briefly as possible their daily life, if only to prove to you how little is required



PORT MORESBY BY MOONLIGHT

to bring them into close community with strangers who may think about living amongst them. We leave England, with its bustling activity, its trains, steam engines, tramways, factories, and thousand distractions, to rest for about six weeks on board ship, seeing the varieties of foreign scenes, Malta, Egypt, and Ceylon, with the long spells of ocean expanse, where the passengers grow to be one family as it were; then we land at Melbourne to find England with its bustle and traffic repeated.

As we progress towards the North we appear to be gradually living back time, and drifting into the period of the old coaching days, when men took time to breathe upon their journeys. Then, as we leave Thursday Island behind, it feels as if we had dropped centuries in an hour, and were approaching the Britain which Julius Cæsar came to subdue. Yorke, Murray, Darnley, all lovely islands, which we stop at, help to acclimatise us and accustom our eyes to the change of scenery before us. We have been gradually getting used to tropical verdure as we sail up the Barrier Reef of North Queensland, while the distant effects of mountains and coast with colouring are pretty similar in all parts of the world—a difference in outline, cloud changes a trifle more vivid, but the same blue-grey and purple haze over all.

We have a summer sea while in the Torres Straits, like to the rippling calmness which we have enjoyed since leaving the golden sands of Keppel Bay, with bright green waves and tawny sea-snakes floating languidly past; then we leave the friendly protection of the coral reefs and get into the rough tumble of the Papuan Gulf, where we have a couple of days of misery, before the table-like outline of Mount Yule rises up on the horizon, and gives us the first glimpse of our promised land.

Half a dozen fine young men welcome us as we drop anchor. They have come in their canoes, and bring to us desperately hard bunches of bananas from Yule Island. They are splendid specimens of manhood, with cassowary head-ornaments and dog-teeth necklets, painted on the cheeks with alternate stripes of black and white, with the brown skin left for the third tint, wearing bone and coral

nose-bars, hair-spun armlets, a fine string tightly braced round their middle, and all their other perfections left as Nature designed them.

We are not much afraid of them, and they do not appear to be in the slightest degree afraid of us, until our engineer gives them a sudden blast with the steam whistle, when they all simultaneously plunge overboard, to reappear in another moment laughing somewhat awkwardly at their betrayal of consternation.

I dare say our forefathers, in the olden times, would have bolted also if the noble Romans had startled them with a steam whistle.

We go over Yule Island and investigate the gardens and fields, the plantations of sago, and the groves of coconut and betel palms. The natives are a friendly race who are living at peace with the French missionary, and rearing home vegetables and fruits from the seeds which he has brought to them and shown them how to plant.

CHAPTER XLV

THE PAPUAN AT HOME

General Survey of New Guinea (*continued*).

Our next rest is at Port Moresby, where we discharge cargo and take in fresh water before going eastward.

The natives are the workers and take off the cargo in their canoes, bringing fresh water from the springs in iron tanks which we lend them for this purpose. They work well for about four hours at a stretch, when they strike and will not go on until they are paid for what they have done; they will not give trust until the work is finished, but go on cheerfully again, when their demands are satisfied, for another four hours, when the squaring-up has again to be repeated.

Horses have been introduced at Moresby, so that they have become used to them, but they are very much afraid of sheep; we had to land half a dozen, and it was with

great difficulty we persuaded three stalwart fellows to come alongside and lend a hand to take them ashore. They told us with loud voices that they were not afraid of sheep, but they laughed nervously when they saw them kicking, and trembled very visibly as we hoisted them overboard. 'Now steady, and catch,' we cried. Six brown, trembling arms were outspread from the canoe to receive the first instalment, which we had tied at the feet, and three most anxious, pallid faces, with wildly staring eyes were upturned towards it.

'Flop!' Their screwed-up courage has failed them, and the poor sheep slips through their nerveless fingers, and splashes into the water.

All the shouting and cursing on the part of the seamen will not move them to stretch out a hand to save that drowning quadruped, so some of us are forced to jump overboard also and fish it out; then, as we get the others over they shrink back from them, and make no disguise of the horror that possesses them; they consent, however, to paddle the canoe ashore while we sit and look after the live stock: and that is as much as any one can expect from them the first day.

That night, when the tribe gathers round the fires to cook their yams and taro, they will give a graphic account of their awful experiences, while the wives will listen with awestruck faces, until some daring female, not particularly interested in the narrative, will throw a doubt on their story and make laughing-stocks of them—for it is always the women who penetrate the mysteries. Then next day these three frightened canoe-owners will swagger up to where the sheep are grazing, and when they see the poor things run away, they will jeer at them and return to tell us that they were only shamming fear the day before.

Pot-making is the principal craft carried on at Moresby. These pots they fashion from clay, blackening them with plumbago while wet, and firing them afterwards until they look like ironware. Some are beautifully elaborated with quaint carvings; these they take about to friendly tribes and barter for provisions and other articles not made by them.

They are also great at canoe-making and sail-spinning,

but do not use such an extent of decoration as will be found at East Cape, where the hull is one mass of carving and shell-embellishment. The canoes of Hanuabada and Elevari are made mostly with an eye to use rather than for show, some of them being sixty to a hundred feet in length.

The smaller craft with one sail are used for fishing purposes and short coasting voyages, but when they have to go upon their long western annual voyages in search of sago and rice, &c., they lash three or four of the longest hulls together, raising over them a strong platform, with wicker gunwales and cargo-houses out of water reach; then they hoist their swallow-tailed sails, two, three, or four, and with flying streamers of palm fronds, locks of human hair, skulls and shells dangling about, and cassowary tufts raised above the carved prows, they sail away in grand style.

These united canoes are called lakatoes, and are capable of holding all the fighting-men of the tribe.

In their daily communion with women they are respectful and subservient rather than masterly; they marry mostly from affection, and have to court their brides as well as pay for them. The female has her own choice out of several suitors. If one pleases her during courtship, he is permitted to purchase her from her parents at the appointed time. They observe a strict etiquette in matters relating to courtship and marriage, and, even after marriage, are most careful not to be seen too much together. Their children come at longer intervals than is usual amongst us civilised Europeans, and a married couple would be shunned by the tribe and compared to pigs and beasts if they had a second child before the first could walk.

It is a rare occurrence for a man to beat his wife, and he does not like to be reminded of the fact if hasty temper has led him into this mistake. The other women generally make a song about it, and sing it whenever he appears; and as no one is so sensitive of ridicule as a New Guinea savage, he will endure a great deal, even from a shrew wife, before he attempts to lift his hand.

He will marry more than one wife if he can afford the luxury and the first mate is quite agreeable, as she very often is, in order to have a fellow-houseworker; and at odd

times, if they cannot agree, he will repudiate the offending member. But, as a rule, he is content with one wife, and divorces are very rare occurrences.

Therefore, with these facts before you, I trust you will agree with me in saying that our own unwashed savages of England, and even some of the dress-coated ones also, do not compare favourably with the hibiscus-adorned savages of New Guinea. Of course it is not all unadulterated perfection with them any more than it is with other nations on the face of the globe. They are terrible fighters amongst themselves, and, as a rule, fight treacherously; as great fighters and as treacherous in their manœuvres as were our own Celtic feudal tribes when they were in force. They have no sense of chivalry where an enemy is concerned, and never spare the death-blow when they have the opportunity to deliver it.

They have very abominable burial rites—indeed, their corpses are the greatest nuisances to visitors; they come under your notice at every turn of the road, and ruin many a good appetite before the memory of them can pass away.

With their domestic pets also they are more quaint than nice, according to our Western ideas. They are very fond of pigs and dogs, and if very particular not to nurse more than one baby at a time, they do not at all object to take up a young pig or pup and suckle it along with their own offspring.

Pigs, puppies, and babies all cuddle together in the one cradle, and seem to have equal attention from the fond mistress and mother.

Their houses are clean and comfortable, carefully thatched with palm fronds, and raised on high posts with wide platforms from which they can visit one another when inclined. They do their cooking mostly on shore, except in those sea-built towns such as at Tupuselei.

Their gardening implements are of a very primitive order, yet effective enough to serve their present purposes—a pointed stick or two to scrape the earth, Nature being left to finish the job; but it is a lavish Nature in these parts and a generous sun, so that they have not much room to grumble at the results.

The gardens are picturesque if not very orderly, each plot being protected by large palisades to keep the wild boar and other beasts of prey out, with long lanes between the different properties, over which swing the broad leaves of the mammy-apple tree or more pendulous filigree-work of palms.

Their fishing-tackle is simple but effective—nets for trailing along the reefs, net bags fixed on bamboo poles for dipping through the waters, many-pronged fishing spears of black palm. They do not elaborate the implements of peace much, but show some very beautiful designs and specimens of native art on their war implements—their shields, swords, axes, and poisoned arrows.

Their calabashes and hau-baus, or native pipes, are also wonderful in the symmetry and beauty of their designs, no two being exactly alike. These designs they take from passing events or surrounding objects—flowers, passing clouds, animals, fish, and all sorts of incidents, which they transfer to ornamental scroll-work, working freely, yet always telling their story with definite purpose.

The colouring which they use is always quiet and subdued, no glaring reds or blues or greens, but soft tones of brown, yellow, black and white.

The men embellish themselves lavishly about the head, face, neck, and arms with flowers, hair-combs, shell and bone ornaments, leaving from the neck downwards fully exposed, with the exception of the waist-string. The women seldom use necklaces, but cover their breasts and arms with tattoo-work instead, wearing bunchy petticoats of coloured grass, about which, by the way, they are very particular.

The men in general are tall and finely formed, with mild, intelligent faces, good features and expressive eyes; some are of a dark copper colour, while others vary from copper tint to a tawny white. The women are not so good looking, being mostly under sized, although there are some graceful exceptions.

I think I have now said all that is necessary at the present to give you a fair idea of the daily life of the Papuan and his capability for work and pleasure, and how easy a matter it is to get along comfortably with him, for any one

desirous of doing so in earnest. He knows keenly what are his dues as man from man; he is open to conviction and of good reasoning powers; he is not unreasonable in his demands, nor unduly suspicious of strangers; he is jealous of his honour, and will not tolerate encroachments upon his rights either as a landowner or as a husband; but if he is met by candour and treated as a white man expects to be treated, there is no man on earth more inclined to open his heart and welcome, with delight, the stranger and the comforts he may bring with him.

I trust also that I have shown that the climate is not too unhealthy, and that the land is only to be dreaded in the same sense which we, in this country, dread a bad drain. Clear the drain and the infection dies, clear the land and the malaria must also pass away.

The present owners have proved themselves willing, when approached properly, to sell the land to Government as it may be required; so that there need be no bloodshed to be feared, so long as they are not forced to remove from their property; there is plenty of room for both strangers and natives, the one to buy and the other to sell, and after that the one to pay for labour and the other to labour for payment. I have also pointed out how the many and wide, deep, and swift-flowing rivers from the mountain ranges, and in some instances penetrating them, will prove the open roadways from the sea to the interior, which at present appears to be locked up by those steep and rugged lofty ranges lining the coast, and separating us from our German neighbours.

I can tell you that nowhere have I seen more splendid and beautiful scenery than in New Guinea. As you pass along the coast from Round Head to China Straits, it is a perfect feast of ever-changing panorama—range behind range of mountains, from the steep grass-covered sides nearest to the sea, with their deep valleys and watercourses, the forest-clad hills behind, to those far distant inland giants, the Owen Stanleys, tier above tier, growing fainter and more mist-like as they tower above and behind one another, until, when we think we have sighted the loftiest, and look on the rolling banks of snow-white clouds, we are

still astonished by the faint but rugged outlines of yet more lofty peaks, staining like a delicate wash that limpid space beyond.

At portions of the passage, as we near China Straits, vast precipices start out as if from the sea, sheer walls from ten to fifteen hundred feet in height, with those purple masses again receding and melting into mid-heaven, then on to Dinner Island and East Cape, with the vegetation dense and overhanging to the water's edge.

Up Milne Bay or Gulf, with the other inland bays opening from it, a glorious play of sunlight on the hillsides, and penetrating into deep fertile gorges without a single yard of monotony anywhere.

To Teste Island with its surrounding cliffs and islands—for the ocean bed is dotted with those isles, all islands of loveliness, such as Boat, Cliffy and Western Islands, Cliffy Island being like an immense iceberg on the point of toppling over; and so on to other islands, and more romantic coast formations, pictures of fertility and pleasure.

This is a rough picture of the only spot on the face of our world which has not yet been thoroughly explored, and which is so well worth the trouble, with no greater natural difficulties in the way than have been already encountered in Africa, and having the advantage of being, with the exception of alligators, free from ferocious beasts of prey; snakes are not plentiful, while there is game enough to be had for the shooting.

Here is a nation interesting from the fact that it is the only and last primitive nation to be found in its pristine vigour and the simplicity of ages, as yet uncontaminated by the contact of the invader; a race quite as ready to adapt themselves to the necessities of civilisation as were the ancient Britons, after the Romans had taught them how to exist according to Rome; new blood which would do the old blood good to blend with; a race of antique men and women ready to be led forward and upwards of their own accord, or dragged backwards and downwards with the same easy facility.



HEATH ISLAND, EAST CAPE, NEW GUINEA

CHAPTER XLVI

UP MILNE GULF

New Guinea—East Cape—From Samarai to Milne Gulf—Natives on the Rampage—An Errand of Peace—Scenery going up.

On August 7, 1886, we left Samarai, or Dinner Island, to try what we could do to conciliate the natives of Gilé-Gilé, who having been wronged, or imagining themselves injured, were up in arms, blowing their conch-shells, and demanding, by way of restitution, the life of a white man.

It was a disagreeable task which we set about, but it was strictly necessary for the safety of any European who might hereafter visit these parts that we should investigate this matter and leave the natives entirely satisfied. This is a duty which travellers must on no account shirk, however dangerous to themselves, as many of the massacres occurring in New Guinea are entirely owing to the carelessness of traders or travellers, who, knowing the cause of discontent, but feeling secure themselves, sail away, leaving the natives unsatisfied, to wreak their vengeance on the next party, who, all unsuspecting of the fate hanging over them, may land. And as the Papuan does not openly express his sense of injury, but cunningly waits his time, the danger is all the greater.

The present cause of complaint was what to Europeans may seem a very trivial one to demand a punishment so heavy, being merely a case of 'hen-lifting'; but to the simple directness of the natives, who do not observe degrees of wrong-doing as we do, with proportionate award of punishment, a wrong is a wrong, and an injury an injury, with only one mode of wiping it out, particularly if the evil-worker is not a relative. He is promptly judged and condemned to death, and straightway hunted after; if captured, he is carefully taken care of, and cooked as tenderly as his age or occupation will permit; but if he escapes, then the vengeance is kept and increased until it may embrace the whole of the next company who chance to land in this evil hour.

In the present instance the case was somewhat complicated, in this way :—A hunter who had gone ashore to shoot the bird of Paradise and other feathered game, after being kindly treated by the natives, had, without asking leave, taken one of a brood of hens.

Now the curious part of the affair was that the hens did not belong to the natives of Gilé-Gilé. In fact, it was rather a difficult point of law to decide whether that particular fowl did not belong quite as much to the poacher as to any one else, it being a young fowl, many generations descended from an original family left, by the Kanaka missionary, when he abandoned the station some fourteen or fifteen months prior to this date, to run wild, breed, and serve as food for the natives or any one else coming after who liked to catch them. But that was no matter from a native point of view; they laid no claim to the fowl themselves, but claimed that they had been placed or left under their special protection until the return of the missionary or his successor, and that therefore their honour had been outraged, to which no salve could be applied except an inward plaister of carefully-roasted European thief, or, failing him, a substitute of the same colour.

So the case stood as we left Dinner Island that misty early morning to negotiate for the pardon of the poor criminal, who waited for our return in fear and trembling. Such a strange, changeable sort of a chameleon is this porcupine called honour, in all parts of the world for ever setting up its back of bristles where least expected, and of a colour the most difficult to define!

We carried with us a Greek outlaw and beachcomber, who, having lived a long time in outlandish parts, believed in but one method of settling a dispute of this description, viz., his cutlass, Winchester and revolver, which weapons he carried constantly about him. We had also a gigantic jet black South Sea Island teacher, the successor to the owner of the hens, who, not seemingly thinking that his Testament or hymn book would be required on his present mission, had left them behind, and taken in their place a couple of revolvers and a little half-caste, reddish-haired, lob-eared native boy to carry and load them for him.

This little boy was covered with the curious but harmless skin eruption so common to the coast tribes, and which I attribute to their strong distaste for salt, and the unvaried yam and taro food; whoever his progenitor may have been, the mixture of races was not improved in him, for his appearance, when compared with the other little pure-bred native boys, was currish to the last degree—he was undersized, thin and ugly. The black teacher seemed to lament that he had not a spare round of cartridges, but brightened up considerably when he discovered that my size fitted his bore, and eagerly accepted from me three spare rounds for each weapon—a grim hint that the people we were about to visit were not lambs.

The other members of our party were—a trading agent of the enterprising firm of Burns, Philp & Co., whom I accompanied as he went from point to point on the look out for probable future stations, and who kindly humoured me when I wished an hour or a night longer to prosecute my artistic investigations; a young man who had come to spend his well-earned holidays from the heavy duties of a Government Office at Thursday Island, and who had already learned to suck and swallow the smoke from the 'bau-bau,' or native pipe, with nearly as much freedom from choking as the natives themselves; an explorer and his plucky wife, who braved the dangers of New Guinea in company with her husband, and who now honoured our company with her presence, putting us all in a very great flutter as to how we were to accommodate her in our limited and rough quarters.

We always admire enterprise on the part of the ladies, though we beg to doubt the expediency of trying their devotion so far as to bring them to a land like this, where the male portion of the natives promenade with a necklace of dog or human teeth by way of costume, and where adventurers have to make all sorts of shifts for convenience of room, &c. For an hour on our upper deck her presence would have been delightful, but the contemplation of a whole day and possibly a night with us, was a much more serious matter than people at home would be apt to imagine.

‘What will we do with her and ourselves?’ was the consideration which engrossed us during the entire evening of the 6th. Our little steamer had only one very small compartment, which we used as a saloon by day and a sleeping-cabin at night, while what with cargo and curios, every corner was so completely filled and crammed above and below that we had hardly space ourselves to move about, far less accommodate a female. However, it had to be faced, and we made up our minds to do our best under the circumstances, and trust that our efforts to please would compensate for our lack of ability.

We fixed upon 6 A.M. to weigh anchor, and as our guests were expected about five, we stayed up all night so that we might be dressed in good time, taking our baths by turns while the others watched for signs of movement ashore, and tortured ourselves for the first time inside stiff collars, coats, and shoes. On ordinary occasions we had roughed about in our pyjamas and bare feet, but now we tried to look happy and respectable with a day of utter misery before us.

The morrow would be the anniversary of my birthday. How was it to be spent? Giving a friendly drink round to my companions on board, in which I could participate, or being the means of a feast ashore, during which I would be also present, not as one of the partakers, but as one of the partaken—a solemn thought, which I daresay crossed all our minds at times, like the shadows which fell upon the waters of the gulf and hollows of the mountains, as the clouds flew over the surface of the sun. No matter, we had all our time to run, and a smash from a club or the cut of a sword are not the worst deaths on record, while it does not much matter, beyond the sentiment of the thing, whether afterwards we become incorporate with brother man or brother worm.

My friend the swarthy Greek found his way to beside where I was sketching, and now stood puffing at his pipe, a lurid gleam in his dark eye, and an angry flush on his sun-burnt cheek. It appears that one of the gentlemen on board had first asked to be introduced to him, and when his request was granted, deliberately turned his back on him and

snubbed him—a singular method of showing superiority and dignity, which I have observed in other parts of the civilised world as a preventive lest the something which God fashioned exactly like ourselves, but which chance has placed in a slightly different sphere of life, should presume upon his similarity to our own ordinary clay. From a standpoint of honesty and honour I could not altogether regard this treatment as undeserved, although it might have been administered before rather than after the solicited introduction.

‘Humph! A fine explorer he is, with his gentlemanly airs,’ muttered the insulted Greek (Nicholas, like many of his class, was apt to mistake caddish arrogance for gentlemanly refinement, I suppose because under this form the quality was most frequently displayed before him). ‘He has got indigestion next, and is going in for smelling-salts and cold-water cloths on his head.’ Our visitor certainly had exhibited a few varied ailments since his advent aboard that morning.

‘I bet he never reaches the top of Mount Owen Stanley unless he is carried up in a litter.’

Nicholas puffed savagely at his well-used pipe as he muttered this, and after feeling the edge of his cutlass, relapsed into moody silence, with his brawny arms folded across the taffrail, and his eyes fixed upon the rugged coast ranges which we were passing.

‘Have you ever landed on that coast?’ I asked him, to change the conversation.

‘Yes, twice, and had hot quarters of it both times.’

‘Then they are savages?’

‘Savage ain’t the word! They torture you before they cook you over there. I tell you what, I once came upon them just beginning to roast a young maid after they had stuffed her chock-a-block with hard bananas.’

‘Why did they do this?’

‘Well, you see they have their own ideas of cooking in these parts. They like to eat their bananas done that way, and when they catch the grub they force it to eat as much as they can stuff down of the fruit; then they put it before a slow fire, alive, and when they think the

bananas are ready cut them out and eat them. The flesh they don't care much about.'

'Horrible! But did you save the girl?'

'Of course I did. I let them have the contents of my Winchester right off, and when the rest bolted, got her away. She wasn't much the worse except for the fright and the gorging, and as soon as we were safe became quite lively.'

Nicholas did not mention the ultimate fate of this maiden, and at the moment I was too busily engaged with my sketch to ask about her after-history. We were getting well into Milne Bay or Gulf; for although it is marked down on the charts as a bay, from its magnitude it may well be termed a gulf, and also to distinguish it from the numerous bays which lead from it.

On both sides we could see the land rearing up very high: mountains with steep sides and deep indentations and valleys with some portions grass-covered, but more frequently close jungle, while, looking down the chasms and valleys constantly opening up as we passed along, we could see vast stretches of immense timber-land—cedar, tamarind, and other tropical trees, while numerous stream-beds and torrent-courses proved the plentiful supply of water.

Overhead, the sky was broken up by sunny and swiftly-sailing rain-clouds, summer showers which fell very frequently and served for a few moments to cool the air, as the thin drops rained upon us like fine spray, to be quickly followed by intervals of fierce glittering sunshine.

A soft grey atmosphere lay over the landscape and smooth surface of the gulf, till it seemed like a lake only, slightly ruffled by the passing breeze. Indeed, the effect was exactly similar to that which I have seen on Lake Derwent-water and the hills of Borrowdale, mellow-grey purple shadows shifting perpetually—now rushing down the mountain sides, as if chasing the sunshine into the deep hollows, now sweeping over the distant waters with the dazzling gleam of quicksilver in front, a constant scene of change and motion, producing the first home-like feeling which I had felt for many months.

So we slowly steamed along and approached our destination, Gilé-Gilé, passing many points of beauty, and

delicious stretches of sand with mangrove fringes, while behind this foreground babbled down little streams, and tiny waterfalls leaped over cliffs, and played round boulders, hiding amongst foliage and rippling over golden beds, on their way to annihilate their laughing freshness in this marriage with the briny flood, as the straight shafts of sunlight struck through the cloud-apertures and pierced into many an awful chasm.

We saw no signs of life or smoke as we passed along, but we knew that the natives were there in force, watching from concealed places the strange smoking monster which went puffing and snorting along, and beating the waters into white foam with its wriggling tail.

As we draw near to the native village of Gilé-Gilé we see the land closing in till it stretches away like the banks of a thickly-foliaged river, with ranges of misty blue mountains beyond. On one side of this narrowing neck we observe a stretch of sand in front of a dense thicket of palms and other trees, with a copra station composed of store and drying sheds, where the natives prepare the cocoanuts for the traders who occasionally call here; on a narrow strip or tongue of land dividing the mouth of a fresh-water river from the broader estuary, we see the pile-raised huts of the village, with groups of natives sitting round large fires, while their canoes are drawn up to the beach.

No one amongst those squatting groups makes a movement or seems to betray consciousness of our presence, although the unusual sound of the shrieking of the steam-whistle must have startled them. They sit sullenly with their backs to us, a dangerous sign with savages, so that we are forced to lower our dinghy and row over to the deserted copra station, leaving the engineer, firemen and sailors with rifles and pistols to guard the little steamer in case of an attack, while we take with us our weapons and ammunition.

Nicholas fires off his revolver in the air to attract their attention without producing any effect, after which Tom the native teacher, who knows their language, stands up in the dinghy and shouts out our errand, asking the chief to come over for a consultation.

We wait a little longer and then see a movement taking place. One figure with a conical-shaped cap rises and comes slowly down to the canoes, followed by about fifty men, naked but carrying with them spears and other weapons. They prepare to get into the canoes, when Tom stops them by shouting out that we are determined to shoot them if he brings more than a dozen with him, the half to be women. Tom explains that they mean mischief when they leave their women behind.

At this the chief once more retires, and we can observe a very excited discussion going on in the camp, during which pause we look to our weapons and prepare for action. However, it does not appear that we have this extremity to face, as we can see the chief once more returning, with half a dozen warriors and three women, one of whom carries a baby, but they appear to come much against their inclinations.

‘All right,’ says Tom; ‘they won’t begin fighting—I think we can manage them.’ So we all sit down on the sands to watch them paddle across, while those who smoke charge their pipes and prepare to light up, so that we may appear quite unconcerned.

I daresay we all looked quite cool and composed as we sat thus, waiting on the approach of the chief of Gilé-Gilé, whether we felt so or not, the more so on account of our lady-visitor, who had insisted on coming ashore with her husband, and who, although the only one unarmed, looked as cool as the others—a little woman she was, with grey eyes, grey hair, and a complexion milky from the quantity of the new arsenic fever preventive which she had been compelled to take since coming to New Guinea, and clad in an æsthetic-cut gown made of a light, soft grey material. As a son of Scotland, I could the more enthusiastically admire the real Caledonian courage of this daughter of Scotland who kept her feelings so well under control in that time of indecision and danger.

One of our company and Tom had come to loggerheads on the passage about the vexing theft question. Tom was prepared to accept the native view as to the ownership of the hens and claim them in the name of the missionaries, so as to leave only the wounded honour to be settled; while

this gentleman wished to teach the natives a new point of law whereby they might consider the fowls as their own property when they had been abandoned so long; and so after much wrangling poor Tom had to sulkily acquiesce and act as interpreter only—*i.e.*, to state the case as the other chose to represent it, the white man being dominant. Poor Tom was a powerful South Sea Island native, with all the fierce passions of his race still boiling within him, and not so very long himself redeemed from savagedom; he was not inclined to comprehend the legal quirk now propounded to him, any more than the Papuan chief would be likely to, when it was placed under his notice. He conscientiously believed that the fowl were his property since he had succeeded to all the other effects of his predecessors, and wanted, with all his might, to believe in this side of the question; he knew well that the chief took this view of the matter, so that it was a great strain upon his lately acquired Christian forbearance and meekness to expect him to stand cheerfully by and translate words which gave away what he considered to be his own just and lawful rights.

As we rose to receive the chief and his retinue, I glanced over towards the opposite shore and noticed about a dozen canoes furtively putting off, laden with fighting men, and fearing treachery called Tom's attention to this, upon which he immediately ordered the chief to make them go back, or we would sink them and prevent him returning. When he saw that we were in dead earnest he waved his hand, pointing towards the huts, upon which they all slowly retired.

Now began a long confabulation, during which we who did not know the language were obliged to content ourselves with studying the faces. Nicholas stood quietly behind me, leaning on the barrel of his loaded Winchester, a grim look upon his face, but with watchful eyes. Our chosen representative gave his message, which Tom received with a discontented air and then turned to speak to the chief, who, standing in the centre of the group, did not reply at once, but gazed on the ground with a gloomy brow. Whatever Tom was saying it did not have a conciliating effect upon the chief, from his sullen, abrupt replies.

'Is he translating fairly?' I asked the Greek, who understood the language.

'Yes,' replied Nicholas, 'word for word as he is told, but the native will not own the hens. He says they are Tom's but were under his charge, and that no "Koko" will recompense him for the disgrace brought upon his tribe.'

Another long and excited talk with the same effect, and Tom appears much troubled. 'He wants one of us to be left since he cannot get at the hunter, and gives Tom the choice, so that it is a white man.'

This was becoming momentous, the more so as chancing to look over my shoulder, I saw that while we were all engaged watching the progress of the discussion the native fighting men had taken advantage of our inattention to steal over in their canoes from the village, and now surrounded us, a dark company of armed and threatening savages.

'Look about you, Nick,' I whispered.

'I see,' he replied carelessly, without turning his head. 'Keep cool, or we are in for it.'

'Don't you think we had better let Tom settle the question his own way?' I said to our mouthpiece at this crisis.

'I suppose so,' he muttered turning away. Tom heard, and brightening up once more eagerly continued the conversation with the native. What arguments the teacher used I do not know, but we had the satisfaction before very long of observing the chief look up with a more open expression, while our circle of guards cleared farther from us, and at length, with feelings of relief, we saw the chief hold out his hand, which Tom shook as if ratifying a bargain.

'He will take tobacco for the offence,' observed Tom, turning about, 'and as the hens are mine will allow me to punish the thief my own way, only he must not come to Gilé-Gilé any more or he will be cooked.'

'All's well that ends well.' I now felt at liberty to leave the group and look about me for subjects for my pencil, so I turned about to investigate the place and take some impressions.

I strolled along the beach to where a clump of trees hid the upper portion of the gulf, and getting past these I came

upon one of the women the chief had brought, the one with the baby, who was now sitting, with the child lying over her lap, on the sand.

As I paused for a moment to look at them the child moaned as if in great pain, and bending nearer to see what the matter was, I noticed an immense boil on its neck, almost ripe and at its most painful stage.

Feeling that a slight prick would give the little one instant relief, I at once sought by signs to explain to the mother that I could cure it. She regarded me listlessly while I made my pantomimic explanations, and at length, when I thought she understood my intention, I laid down my sketching materials and, producing my pocket-knife, opened the sharpest blade, and knelt down to operate.

I was just in the act of pricking the inflamed part, the mother not objecting, when I heard the voice of Nicholas, who had followed me, shouting 'Look out!' and looking up quickly, felt the imprudence of my interference and my present danger.

A tall, naked savage in the deepest mourning was rushing at me with a large trading sword-knife upraised and ready for action.

He was still about fifteen yards off when I saw him coming, and in another instant I was on my feet facing him, my left hand fumbling in the holster for my revolver. A moment more and I would have been beheaded as neatly as if I had knelt for the purpose.

As I rose the savage brought his run to a walk, and upon my taking a step towards him brought that walk to a full stop; and so we waited, watching each other in eloquent silence.

'Will I shoot him?' cried out the Greek from behind me. 'I have him covered and cannot miss.'

'No, Nick!' I replied. As yet I had never been the cause of bloodshed, and the idea of seeing that fine strong life destroyed gave me a cold chill of horror. 'I will try to manage him without that.'

I continued to walk slowly towards him as I spoke, without turning round, and as he was only watching me, he could not have been aware of his own danger, or how close to

death we both were during that past moment. I felt that he had justice on his side, from his point of view, in attacking me, as he evidently thought I was about to kill his child, and that the advance in friendship ought to come from me; therefore, without pulling out my weapon, I drew close to him, watching him keenly while I approached.

As the distance decreased between us he lowered his sword, and folding his arms, waited for me; the Papuan will take an unfair advantage in war, and stab in the dark, but when brought to bay he never flinches or shows the white feather. So with my enemy now: he never swerved as I came up to him, but stood upright, with arms folded and the sword held ready for action under the left elbow.

When I drew near enough we stood face to face, looking at one another much as two dogs might do before beginning the worry. It was then that I began to feel the awkwardness of my position, for I could not speak a word of his language nor he of mine; and as for Nicholas I did not know how far he might be behind, while I dare not turn to see, as I felt the instant I took my eyes off my enemy the stroke would be made. I remembered that at this spot, not six months before, a European had had his head nearly severed from his body even in the act of trading with the natives, and this recollection did not tend to reassure me. I felt afraid—there is no use denying it—the sensation of icy creepings running up and down my backbone, as I stood and looked at his lurid eyes and ash-blackened face; but I don't think I showed the feelings which were freezing my heart up, therefore I suppose this seeming indifference served me the same as true courage.

We stood in this fashion for perhaps three minutes, while I composed my face into a friendly smile and held out my right hand for him to take. No response, except a tighter clutch at his weapon and a deeper scowl; then I tapped him on the right arm to signify that I must have his hand, at which he drew out the sword and intimated that he would not give it to me.

'No, no, not the sword, but your hand,' I motioned as well as I could; of which appeal he showed an utter want



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of comprehension, as he once more folded his arms and gave me stare for stare.

What was I to do next in order to overcome his savage prejudice? We might continue this position for an indefinite time, and time was an object to me as I wanted to sketch. Suddenly a bright idea flashed across my mind—I would tempt him with koko; so acting on the thought, I dipped my hand into my pouch and brought out a stick of tobacco, which I held out to him, but without avail; he would not unbend, but shut up his lips like a trap and scowled more deeply. Again a moment of thought, while almost unconsciously I brought out my own pipe and began to cut up some tobacco with the open blade of the knife with which I had been about to perform my unfortunate surgical operation, and which I still held in my hand.

I managed to fill my pipe, when the appalling thought flashed upon me, how I was to get it lighted. Smokers all know that it is easy to cut tobacco and stuff it into the bowl of your pipe without withdrawing your eyes from an object; but to take out a match, strike a light and apply it to your pipe, with a wind blowing, without shifting your eyes is an utter impossibility—at least I have never been able to do it.

I dare not put my pipe back unsmoked, for that would show that I was afraid to light it. I dare not take my glance from him to light it, as that would give him the opportunity he was waiting for, to strike; and I could not linger much longer without doing something, for the suspense was becoming insupportable.

At this moment I felt a slight touch at my elbow, and with a swift side glance saw a decrepit old native who had stolen up beside us, and who, seeing me filling my pipe, now held out his own to be similarly treated. I welcomed the interruption like a message of salvation, and taking the pipe from him, began to cut and fill.

I suppose while I was facing my enemy some of the other natives had gathered round, now that truce was concluded with the chief, for before I had supplied the old man three or four pipes were pushed under my nose, all requiring replenishing badly, and held out by brown paws. I could

not look at the owners, but spent the next few minutes busily cutting and filling, watching keenly the expression of the face opposite me while I did so.

Gradually, as pipe after pipe was handed back, I saw a shade of regret gather and deepen upon his countenance, while the frown became less ferocious, and I felt that patience would yet win the victory.

Suddenly, before he was aware of my intention, I dipped my hand into the pocket of a net bag which he carried suspended to his waist-cord, and where I knew, if he had a pipe, he would carry it, and without any objection from him beyond a slight gawky shrinking, I found the object of my search and fished out about the rudest and most dilapidated specimen of a native imitation of our pipes that I ever beheld; it was like the rest, empty, and holding it up I made a sign that I would fill it for him.

At this stage a most sheepish look settled upon that ash-obscured visage, with the faintest shadow of a grin of unbending, at which I felt almost easy. I filled it and tried if it would draw, but finding that it would not I replaced it, and remembering that I had a spare briar-wood in my pocket I produced that, charged it and stuffed it into his mouth before he could object. Not much need for apprehension now—he was unmistakably grinning at his prize.

The old man at my side here made a motion that he wanted me to strike a match and light up all round, upon which I took out my box and again looked towards my enemy. He nodded vehemently to show that he wanted me to light up, upon which I pointed to where the wind was blowing, and signalled for him to hold up his hands together as a shelter. My ruse took splendidly, for up went both his hands as I had directed, and down dropped his sword at my feet, so taking a casual step forward I put my foot, as if by accident, upon the sword-blade, and for the first time I felt safe.

After a few trials, first standing, next both kneeling on the sands face to face, with my knee pressing that dreaded weapon down, while the other natives closed round to keep the wind from us, our pipes were all alight, and then I could afford to breathe.

The danger was over and we were all sitting together, I upon the sword, while my former enemy, now my friend, squatted beside me, an unwashed blackened arm round my neck (for mourners do not indulge in bathing), and the other lovingly patting me on the knee. One of the natives brought my pencil and sketch-book to me, and I began my task with an appreciative and admiring audience surrounding me, passing wondering remarks and exclamations as I proceeded, and pointing from the landscape before us to my pencil notes, with evident signs of recognition.

My guardian angel, Nicholas, stood close by, with his Winchester slung carelessly over his arm and rather a disappointed look on his sunburnt features, as if he was a little sorry that the adventure had ended so tamely. I was not, nor did I attempt any more surgical experiments at Gilé-Gilé.

CHAPTER XLVII

NEW GUINEA

The Return Journey—Teste Island and Mr. Kessick—Surrounding Islands—Lakatoes and South Cape.

I HAVE not taken the reader through the country exactly as I travelled along it myself, preferring to scamper over it quickly, as I like to go over picture galleries, and then return more slowly, lingering over the bits which strike me most.

After leaving East Cape and Milne Gulf, we directed our course to Teste Island, which lies in a south-easterly direction from Samarai or Dinner Island, and about forty miles from the mainland.

Teste Island lies in the centre of a group of islands very singular in their formation, Bell, Clifty, Boat, and West Islands, all within a mile or two of each other.

Our pilot Nicholas, if he had few virtues to recommend him to the kindly notice of Exeter Hall, at least

was thoroughly acquainted with the work which he had taken in hand; he knew the coral reefs as a London cabman knows the streets, and could steer his way as adroitly and as closely to danger, with a bold and steady eye and hand.

Inside the Barrier Reef, from Moresby to the village of Aroma, all is quiet and restful, and much pleasanter to sail or steam along than the stormy waters of the Gulf beyond, if you chance to have a very experienced pilot to guide you; otherwise, I do not know of any more dangerous or uncertain passage. It is as yet very imperfectly charted out, and is filled with coral reefs, or as the sailors term them 'Hummocks,' which jut up to within a foot of the surface, with fathomless intersections, as narrow as lanes, twisting about and terminating in some cases in the most unexpected manner, so that often a vessel has to back out and try another lead.

Where the water is clear, and by day, these threadlike twistings may be easily observed from the deck for many yards in front, the coral, various shades of green, the deep portions intense purple, while fish of every shape and hue dart about over the emerald beds; but as we are continually passing the openings of land streams which wash down the alluvial soil and stir up the sand bars, then the difficulty and dangers are imminent, and the pilot has to be implicitly trusted.

When I passed along this coast, it was at the time that a furious gale was raging outside, so we were either forced to stay at anchor, or risk inside the reefs. Time being an object, we resolved to push on, and feel our way as best we could; twice we stuck fast on sandbanks, both times, fortunately, at low tide, so that a few hours of waiting were our only troubles; four times we tried to get outside, where we thought we saw openings in the surf, but had to 'back' from that awful and thunderous din of waves breaking against the outer wall, not before we could see the white-green sharp teeth waiting to crush us to pieces, while the pillars of snowy froth rose above our masts. It was an appalling moment before the reversing of the propeller conquered the wash, which was sucking us

towards that cruel wall, and we watched with bated breath to see which would be master, the sea or our engines. Then we gave that outside passage up, and trusted to the skill of our pilot.

A hard time he had of it, till we reached Aroma, clinging to the little masthead with bare feet and hand, and waving his orders, with his disengaged arm, to the man at the wheel, while the old skipper sat down helplessly on deck, and bemoaned the open, if rough, sea. 'Give me plenty of sea-room, and none of your rat-trap steering,' he grumbled away, while the pilot clung to his perch aloft, and the little steamer picked her steps gingerly along, turning about after the fashion of a cab in a crowded street, while daylight lasted, to come to anchor for the night, and be at it again by dawn. At times some friendly canoes put off from the villages and guided us to them if we wished to visit. Thus we passed along, in sight of scenery the most magnificent in the world, and with aërial effects delicious to the artist, until we reached Aroma, and saw a decided opening, after which the captain took the wheel and dashed out to his favourite element; while we of the tender digestions lay down on our backs and resigned ourselves to the inevitable.

Our captain and Nicholas waged a perpetual war with one another. Not that Nicholas was aggressive, for he behaved in the meekest and most lamblike way, always ready to give up his authority and stand aside whenever the captain insisted upon it, which he did nearly once an hour. It used to make me laugh to see the gentleness with which Nicholas stood aside when ordered to do so, while the captain, in a blind fury, snatched at the wheel and attempted to get out of that coral trap and, sailorlike, make for the open ocean. At such moments Nicholas would fold his arms and lean against the taffrail, with a placid smile upon his thin lips and a sinister gleam in his snaky black eyes. I always knew what would be the result of that resumption of authority, and the conclusion of the struggle for it.

'Breakers ahead!' yelled the man on the look-out, then an ominous crunching at the bows, and the wild cry of the old skipper to the engineers of 'Back her, back her;' after which he would once more give up the post of honour to

the wily Greek, and sinking down tailor-fashion on the deck, clutch frantically at his iron-grey curls, moaning at his own impotency.

‘Take it, and be ——, you —— pirate! Oh; this —— rat-trap.’

From Samarai to Teste Island required very careful steering, as the sea was fringed with hummocks and reefs; yet Nicholas knew his ground thoroughly, and dashed along at full speed all through the afternoon, shaving gleaming teeth-like edges almost every few minutes, and raising our hair at the dangers we were just missing by an inch or so. When night fell he did not pause, but went on at the same rate, while we leaned over the sides and watched, by the light of the crescent moon and the phosphorescence, the jet-black lanes of deep water, with the silvery gleaming of the wave-covered coral banks on every side of us, the wheel constantly revolving under his strong active wrist, while his dark eyes glared out from the frowning brows like coals of fire.

We run right under the beetling rocks of Cliffy Island, which seem to topple over us like an iceberg about to fall upon us, then over the short stretch of water, and we are anchored at Teste Island.

We are welcomed for the night by Mr. Kessick, one of the most gentlemanly of traders, who lives amongst the natives more like a father or missionary than as a master. The young men of the village sleep at his stores, and obey him with affection, while he also acts as doctor and adviser to the tribes.

The natives all round this quarter have been considered as most savage, treacherous, and remorseless; so that the conversion which Mr. Kessick, with the help of the native teacher, has wrought, is the more to be admired.

Traders amongst savages, although, as a matter of course, they must all be brave and fearless men, are not expected to be particularly refined in their manners or artistic in their tastes, therefore it surprised me all the more to find a modest, refined gentleman, in the true sense of the word, in this Teste Island collector of copra and *bêche-de-mer*, and to see his bungalow ornamented more like a studio than a

trader's cabin : native war and fishing implements artistically arranged round the walls, with photographs and woodcuts placed between the trophies. We lay that night on the bamboo beds, while the young natives slept on the floor of the outhouse, lying about in all positions. I think there must have been over sixty of them, of all ages, from four years to twenty, inside that apartment, when we held the candle over the naked bodies and abandoned limbs of these beautifully modelled sleepers. I don't think I ever looked upon a more perfect sight, or one which could have given me a greater respect for their protector, for it showed the utter confidence which the fathers and mothers had in him to trust their children so completely to his charge.

I did not sleep much, for the mosquitoes were very troublesome, and the night oppressively hot, so that I heard Mr. Kessick rise and go out several times—twice to see if the watchers were at their posts, for a raid from the mainland was not an uncommon thing ; the other times he went out to give medicine to some of the natives, who were sick with fever. He did all this quietly, without disturbing us, and as a matter of nightly duty.

Next morning I went round the island and made sketches of the surrounding islands and the native village.

Outside Mr. Kessick's bungalow grew a gigantic tamarind tree, with great limbs and shoots spreading out, and with corrugated trunk. It was used as a shelter for the natives, and was big enough to cover, with its spreading branches and thick leaves, hundreds of them as they sat under it, only a few yards from where the water lapped over the fragments of snowy coral and curiously shaped and varied tinted shells. Inland the soil was very fertile, as all the islands are, and as the native gardens showed.

To the artist, a New Guinea garden is a real treat, but to the lover of method and order a woeful disappointment ; a slight scratch of the virgin soil and the dropping in of the seed or shoot comprises the native system upon which the ancient craft is carried out, so that it is from a perfect wilderness of *débris* of palm fronds and banana leaves, left as they wither and drop, that the living vegetation rises. A little space is slightly cleared off, but left in delightful

confusion, where the taro or yam is planted, where the mammy apple, or Papuan fruit-tree, spreads out its bulky leaves and massive globes, or the cocoanut, betel palm, or banana waves and drips ; up to the knees you wade amongst the dry or drying fronds, used for thatching purposes, or into muddy holes, without warning except for the rich, long, green grasses, or moist sago groves.

Each tree in these gardens has its owner, and is tapu to all others. The family allotments are surrounded by high palisades of twigs, and divided by long, narrow lanes, down which you follow your nude but friendly guide, seeing the luxuriance inside without daring to touch, as the New Guinea owner is conservative in the extreme, and believes thoroughly in the rights of property.

Bell Rock, which lies about five miles distant, is, like Clifty Island, a most remarkable volcanic formation. It rises like a great bell from the deep waters three or four hundred feet into the air, with upright pillars, steppes, and cavities, while the ledges and tops are covered with foliage. Clifty Island overhangs very much on one side, while on the other it slopes abruptly down to the water's edge, showing bare cliffs riddled with great caves, inside which countless multitudes of sea birds make their homes and breed undisturbed. Boat Island lies like the great mastless hulk of some war-frigate, with rounded, protruding bow and lofty stern. West Island is grass-covered, with the exception of two solitary trees which stand on the shore side.

Teste Island is about four miles in length, with three high cones in the centre, and slopes gradually down to the sea ; it is thickly wooded near the coast and grass-covered on the heights. The native village is a very interesting sight, with the cocoanut trees growing between the houses, and large canoes floating in the cove.

I have given here a group of the ordinary fishing and trading craft of New Guinea, the lakatoes, or larger trading vessels, with thin, swallow-winged sails (generally three in number), being reserved for the longer voyages which the natives take annually to barter their season's stock and lay in provisions for the wet season.

An exciting time it is when the huge village ship takes



CATAMARANS AND LAKATOES

its departure on the momentous cruise, which means, to those left behind, comfort, wealth, or dreary desolation, as the return is successful or otherwise. The lakatœ, which is the general property of the village, is a vessel measuring fifty, sixty, or a hundred feet, and capable of bearing all the fighting-men of the tribe, who set forth on each of these expeditions armed and prepared to fight to the death for their venture.

They embark about the middle of the dry monsoon with the produce of the year, which they take westward to trade for the sago and rice that they may require. Then there are great preparations, with solemn meetings of the spirit-men to prognosticate their luck; for although the natives of this land are about the least credulous of savages, without veneration or religious tendencies, and ready to mock at the tales the missionary relates, they will not venture out on an important expedition without first consulting the oracles, or spirit-mediums, as to how they are likely to succeed. They hold a solemn conclave and feast, to which some of the seers come, wearing uncouth wooden masks, and crying as if under control; these they believe to be the voices of departed souls telling them what to expect. They have no respect for the masks behind which the medium speaks, as they get them up themselves, and are always willing to sell them for a few sticks of 'koko' (tobacco), which demonstrates that they are not idolaters; they have no form of actual worship, and seem without speculation as to a future, yet they prove their belief in an after-life by the attention that they pay to the spirit-voices.

The bode being favourable, they sail away in their skull-and shell-decorated ships, attended a few miles on the way by the lesser craft, such as are here seen crowding together; then there are wild farewells from the wives, mothers, and old men, who return to wait with anxious hearts for the coming home, while they dash gallantly round the headlands to face the dangers of enemies and the perils of shipwreck, as they steer towards those distant fields.

By-and-by, if all goes well, they return with the wet monsoon—return to gladden the hearts and anxious eyes of

those who wait. Then there is feasting and dancing, with new raumas for the young girls, and husbands for those who are ready to wed ; but if it is a failure, through disaster or war, then the plumbago is lavishly used, and the women sit with tattered skirts, and mourn the loss of those left behind, and the famine which overhangs their future. Then the girls crouch in gloomy silence or bitterly moan in the darkened chambers, while the young braves shoulder their man-traps and skulk into the woods to watch for the unwary wanderer, and the taro and yams are neglected for the more awful gorges of human flesh—blackening their fame with the notoriety over which we shudder, as we read about the cannibals of New Guinea.

It was upon a calm Sunday forenoon that we reached South Cape, where the mission station founded by the Rev. James Chalmers is situated—a scene of perfect peace and content, with the gong sounding for church, and the many-tinted garments of the natives, who were appearing and disappearing between the trees and scrub, on their way to church. Of course it is only on high days and holidays that these striking-looking garments are put on, and as the haberdashery stock is limited, they take them by turn, and the sermon by instalments, which accounted for our seeing about two-thirds of the natives sitting around, in a state of nudity, outside the church, when we got ashore. They were waiting until their friends inside had enough of it, so that they might also be able to dress and have their share.

The native is not very devout as a rule, but he has an inquiring mind, and likes to try experiments with the new faith and the unaccustomed costume. He is also very industrious, as we saw by the indications, while passing along, of terraces and gardens leading right to the summits of the lofty and abruptly-rising hills. The natives here are comparatively peaceful now to what they were on the arrival of the first missionary, and are becoming used to the sight of white faces and the *advantages* of civilisation.

The romantic aspect of South Cape recompenses us for the more Australian appearance of the hills farther

west. Here we begin to find rocky cliffs and overhanging leafage, which dips and repeats itself in the calm waters, ever increasing in loveliness as we sail farther towards the east.

CHAPTER XLVIII

MISSIONARIES AND TRADERS

The Rev. James Chalmers and his Work—Samarai—Jerry's Swim—Kerepuna—Dressed and Undressed Savages—Currie, Guise, and the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

THE Rev. James Chalmers, who was absent from New Guinea while I was there, but whom I met in London and compared notes with, is one of the most enterprising and fearless of explorers. With the exception of Samuel Macfarlane, LL.D., who was the missionary pioneer of this land, no white man is more respected and loved by the natives of New Guinea. He has a great liking for, and trust in, the natural honesty and goodness of the savage, and thinks no more of setting out upon a long expedition to unknown districts with only his pipe and stock of tobacco, than another man would of taking a morning stroll. He carries no firearms or weapons, and trusts entirely to Providence for his provisions; so he has succeeded where more cautious or timid men would have failed, and his name as your friend is enough to ensure safety almost all over the land.

'Tamate,' as they call him, does not attempt the impossible or seek to revolutionise them too suddenly. He goes amongst them, laughs, and amuses them, establishes a station, lives with them for some time until he has won their confidence, and then leaves amongst them native teachers to finish what he has begun. Personally, I think he has the fewest prejudices and the least bigotry of any missionary that I have ever met anywhere, and if the matter rested with him to decide, he would gladly welcome and extend the right hand of fellowship to any missionary

who came to civilise the natives, no matter to what sect he might belong, Roman Catholic or Protestant. He is bigoted only upon one point, in which I also join entirely with him—to protect strictly the claims, rights, and persons of the natives.

It was at South Cape he had the affliction to lose his brave and noble partner, Mrs. Chalmers, and here they had some of their hardest and most dangerous experiences before they overcame, by kindness and patience, the animosity of the savages.

South Cape is a perfect garden of loveliness, with all the islands lying closely about, like the islands and headlands of one of our Scottish lakes, the lofty peaks of the North Foreland rearing above the trees 1,800 feet, and dotted all over with the terraces and gardens of the natives. Palm, Stacy, Heath, and Samarai, or Dinner Islands, cluster closely together, and open one on to the other, almost like the bends of a wide river.

Yet, although beautiful, there are dangerous episodes often occurring in these straits, for atrocious murders by natives are by no means a thing of the past. On Heath Island we passed the empty house of a trader who had been killed about six months previous to our coming. In fact, as we sail along close to the land, it is necessary to take watch and watch about each night, so that we may not be surprised, and so share the fate of many of our predecessors.

Samarai is a delicious island, which has been made even more perfect by cultivation. The missionaries have planted a fine palm-tree avenue along the sands, through which you may walk in deep shadow to the station, with the feathery fronds of the cocoanut and betel trees waving and meeting high above your head.

The night we reached Samarai I went through this palm grove with one of the traders there, a Russian, to see some birds of Paradise and curios which he had preserved. The night was hot, and as we had to wade ashore from our dinghy we wore only our pyjamas and went barefoot—a silent march over the loose sand in the inky darkness, with now and again a soft satiny body touching



BELL AND CLIFFY ISLANDS, NEW GUINEA



us, as a naked native glided past. No words were spoken; we could feel a light, warm breath on our faces, and, as we put out our hands, the smooth skin.

Inside the store-room we found the single men and male children all lying about asleep, as at Teste Island, with arms and legs tossed over one another as they had flung themselves down—here a stalwart young man crushing full weight upon the tender limbs of a little boy who did not appear to be disturbed by the load, or, in another place, one little fellow making a pillow of another's breast or stomach.

The box where the trader kept his birds was at the other end of the apartment, and it astonished me to see the careless way in which he walked over these nude sleepers. Planting his foot on a head, or a body, or limb, he calmly strode upon them without considering his steps in the least, or disturbing them much. The sleeper merely gave a grunt when the weight was removed, and half turned himself, but without waking up. It was the most Spartan and apathetic exhibition I had ever witnessed.

That night, when we got back to the ship and were having a smoke with the trader, after settling for our purchases, we were startled by the apparition of a dripping wet, wild-looking little object, who had scrambled up the sides of the steamer, and appeared before us with only a red rag tied round his waist.

It was one of the trader's mates, a very tiny man, half Mexican, half Frenchman, who had lived so long with savages that it was hard to decide what he was, his skin was so thoroughly baked from exposure to the sun. He had swum from the island, a distance of about two and a half miles, past the reefs, through water infested with sharks, and had come to purchase from us a rifle, disdaining the aid of any of the canoes, several of which were then lying alongside of us, with the natives aboard.

'How the devil did you come, Jerry?' asked Nicholas, who knew the little man well.

'By de water, of course; you didn't tink I could fly, did you?'

'But the sharks?' I asked.

'De shark be good—God-dam,' answered the little man contemptuously, as he shook the water out of his long, matted hair.

We showed him some of our new rifles and Winchesters, and after we had bargained as to price, he dived his dirty paw into his soaking waistband and produced what had been a roll of bank notes when he left shore, but was now a handful of soft pulp, perfectly useless to any one, as he squashed them up in his fist, and flung them with an oath from him against the cabin panels, where they stuck like a pat of clay.

'Dere goes eighty pounds,' he shouted, with a wild laugh. 'Gi' me the gun on tick till to-morrow morning.'

We handed him the gun, and he prepared to go off with it as he had come, fish-fashion, when Nicholas caught him by the nape of the neck, saying gruffly:

'No Jerry, my boy, you don't wet that 'ere gun until you have paid for it,' and lifting him clean up, as one might do a kitten, pitched him carelessly into one of the canoes.

A couple of yells followed his descent, one from the startled native, who had been sitting dozing inside when the butt end of the rifle struck him, and one from Jerry, as he landed across a paddle on the small of his back.

'Oh, you ugly black Greek pirate! let me at you'—and Jerry once more scrambled up the sides, on vengeance bent, to be met, as his head appeared, with an open-handed smack from Nicholas, which landed him once more in the bottom of the canoe, where he lay perfectly quiet. The native paddled him ashore, while our pilot rejoined us sedately and as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred to disturb his equanimity.

After leaving South Cape we sail along the coast towards Kerepuna, passing Arangoni Bay, Mayri, Table, Baxter and Cloudy Bays, with the Owen Stanley Ranges for ever on our right—Mount Thompson 6,900 feet high, Mount Simpson 9,972, Suckling 11,228, and the other peaks ranging from 7,000, to Mount Owen Stanley 13,205 feet above the sea; majestic mountains with rugged, upstanding peaks floating softly blue amongst and about the snowy clouds, with bold,

lofty hills between, and great yawning valleys, and fearful precipices over which glittering waterfalls pour like silvery threads in the distance.

Then, after getting past the native towns of Dedele and Domara, we get into the districts of Aroma and Loyatupu, and come to Hood Lagoon and the great town of Kerepuna.

Kerepuna may well be called the capital of New Guinea, or rather of that portion under the English protection, in comparison with the other towns, such as Hula, Aroma, &c. It is a city, having streets and lanes where the houses face one another, with their broad platforms in front and a vast confusion of piles and posts all about.

Although built upon the shore, it is above high-water mark; and from the sea the backs of the houses only are to be seen, with the rows of canoes and mat-protected lakatoes. Inland, the streets lead to the gardens, where all who are able work from sunrise to sunset two days out of every three, it being the custom to have two rest-days every six, on which they lounge about and receive or pay visits to the other friendly tribes. On these rest-days the town presents a very animated appearance, with shell-adorned warriors practising their spear-throwing, or women chattering and laughing merrily; while others who follow the sea, ply their trading vessels or lakatoes about the translucent waters.

On working-days the sick or mourners only are to be seen about the streets, with the occasional pet pig or dog sniffing about the palm-leaf covered and highly flavoured remains of some departed relative. Yet the Tapu-house and its tall spire always looks festive with the many fluttering streamers fringing its sides. The people of Kerepuna are magnificent specimens of savage health, strength, and beauty. Indeed, I have never seen any human beings as tall as one or two that I saw here, the chieftain particularly, who was a perfect giant in stature, with very light, copper-coloured skin, and splendidly proportioned. I saw also here one of the native men with a complexion as fair as any European, which I believe is not an uncommon sight amongst the Papuans; his appearance struck me as very disagreeable amongst his more richly-toned companions: he

looked so *naked* and out of place, whereas the brown skins never gave one this impression of nudity. A native dressed is a native spoilt, as I afterwards realised at Hula, where Kama held his court in florid-coloured pyjamas and bandanna hat. After all, it is only we Europeans with our colourless, glaring skin who cannot afford to go without covering.

Some time ago in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette* were published some articles on New Guinea, in which the names of two Europeans, Guise and Currie, were mentioned as having, by their immorality, rendered themselves obnoxious to the natives of Hula. I am happy to say that I am in a position to state that these *Pall Mall Gazette* charges are utterly unfounded, so far as the natives of Hula are concerned.

It seems a pity, when sweeping charges of this description are made, and the victims are too far away to contradict them and prove their falseness, while by mentioning the names the friends at home are made to writhe impotently, that there is not a more careful investigation made than appears to have been made in the present case.

Messrs. Guise and Currie, a few years ago, went over to New Guinea from Australia, prompted partly by an English spirit of adventure, and partly by the hope of making themselves useful to Government. Failing in the latter hope, of getting employment, they settled down in Hula, the only Englishmen not connected with the mission society who had ventured to take up their residence with the natives. That they may have aroused the jealousy of the missionaries by daring to settle down, as it were, upon their preserves without asking and obtaining their permission, I will allow; and that the representatives of Government were biassed enough to regard with suspicion their staying, without apparent occupation or purpose, in this uncivilised portion of the globe, I will also admit; but that the natives of Hula objected to their presence, as stated, I must emphatically contradict, as I must also the gross charges made against these two gentlemen, of being the cause of immorality and dissatisfaction amongst the natives.

Before Messrs. Guise and Currie took up their abode at Hula, the mission officials at Moresby had left on the ground one of their South Sea Island teachers, with one Kama as his assistant. Kama hitherto had been considered a convert amongst the natives of New Guinea. A native of Hula, they educated him at Moresby, and when they considered him sufficiently prepared, sent him down with the islander to see what he could do amongst his own people.

The Papuan differs very greatly from the more impressionable South Sea Islander in his credence in the spiritual; he is open to conviction on things material, but having no religious tendencies, or credulity in tenets which he cannot test, will only listen so long as the things taught are a novelty, and openly derides them when they cease to amuse. This is the secret of the non-success of the missionary in making many real converts of the natives of New Guinea. With an idolater it becomes easy work to transform him into a Christian, as the soil is so far already prepared; and that he may be devout and sacrificing in his new faith stands to reason, considering the utter, unquestioning belief he had in the old creed. But the Papuan is a materialist in the strictest sense of the word and, beyond a little coquetting with spirit-mediums at odd times, as much out of sport as for instruction, laughs openly at all forms or indefinite promises.

Kama had learnt to sing hymns and to read the Motu Testament, but the payment he was to receive as assistant teacher was the chief motive of his acceptance of the post, and very shortly, finding that it was not what he expected, he threw off the mask of religion, and bringing the vices which he had learnt, along with the hymns, home to his simpler relatives, gave to Hula the name for immorality which it at present bears, and which has been put to the account of the two plucky young Englishmen, Guise and Currie.

That Kama has brought this disgrace upon his kinsmen may be proved by the fact that he was discharged for dishonesty and immorality, although I could see no mention of this missionary convert in the account given in the pages of the *Pall Mall*; and as he still lives at Hula,

plying his evil trade, although no longer in the employment of the missionary, I had ample chances of investigation while I was there. Hula is the only village in New Guinea against which any charge of immorality can be laid. It is not bad, in comparison with other places in the South Seas or in more civilised portions of the globe, but for New Guinea I do admit that it is; yet Kama I hold to be the sole cause, not Messrs. Guise and Currie.

When I was in Hula I mentioned the two names supposed to be obnoxious, and was warmly received in consequence by the natives; they asked me eagerly if Guise and Currie were not coming back. 'They were very good, and we liked them much,' the natives all said.

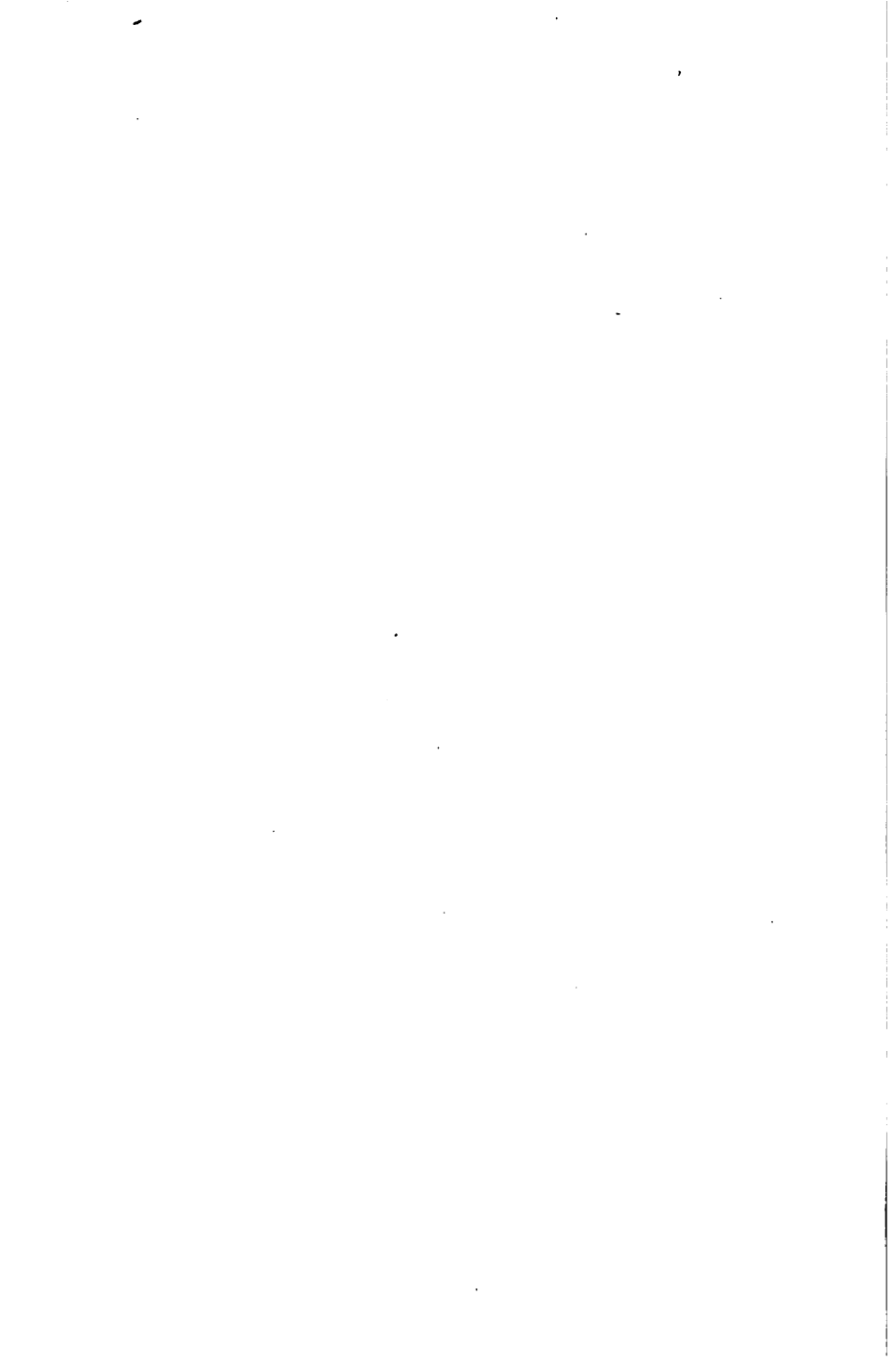
When the Government representatives banished the young men from the land, they could not possibly have then laid the charge that their presence was obnoxious to the natives, as they were forced to use stratagem to get them away from the tribe without being themselves molested, and the two gentlemen went of their own accord, otherwise the war-sloop would not have ventured to drag them from their allies. Also, if they had been unwelcome to the natives, Government would not have been troubled in the matter except to avenge their murder, as the natives generally kill and cook first, and complain afterwards; but the fact that the young men were permitted to stay for two years amongst the tribes, is the strongest evidence that they were welcome guests, without the additional evidence which my own experience enables me to render to the good names of these two plucky young Englishmen who have been so grossly maligned.

Mr. Guise told me a good story about Currie, which shows the mettle of the man. When they first settled amongst the natives, they were viewed with much suspicion, and several attempts were made to kill them, which, happily, they turned aside without damage to themselves or bloodshed.

On one occasion the natives came *en masse*, with their spears and weapons, to attack the strangers. Currie, looking out, saw them coming along the sands, and without waiting to pick up anything to defend himself, or even his hat, rushed out to meet them bareheaded, and putting down his head



TAPU HOUSE AND HUTS, NEW GUINEA



like a goat, ran it right against the stomach of the chief, bowling him and a couple of those behind him over with the one blow. Whether it was this unusual mode of fighting or the face of Guise, who stood laughing at the door of their hut, which impressed the natives most, he could not say, but they made no more attempts at violence, and heartily joined in the laugh and made friends. The Papuan has a keen sense of humour, and enjoys a practical joke hugely, as I have found out often in my intercourse with him.

Guise I met at Yorke Island, where he was waiting for his time of banishment to be past. Poor Currie had gone to Japan in search of adventure, and there met his doom in the shape of the poisoned blowpipe. The news of his death came home about a month after this calumny had been published in the *Pall Mall*.

As for Kama, the renegade Christian Papuan, when I mentioned his notorious name to my friend Mr. Chalmers, he quite agreed with me that he was the very worst man in New Guinea, and that no crime was too vile for him to commit.

CHAPTER XLIX

KEREPUNA

A Big Man—Mourners—Hula—Coast Scenery—Port Moresby—
Elevara and Hannabada.

WHEN I landed at Kerepuna, the big man who stood leaning on the huge branch of a cotton tree, lazily watching the coming ashore of the strangers, waited until I had come close to him, and then, with a good-natured smile upon his good-looking but massive features, took me up by catching hold of my waist-belt, and, hoisting me upon his broad shoulder, strolled off leisurely to his own part of the town, followed by a crowd of laughing natives, male and female, and giving me almost a bird's-eye view of the surrounding landscape.

He was playing a merry joke for the benefit of his

people, and they appreciated seeing the white man perched like an ape upon the shoulders of their great chief. But he did not intend any harm; for after parading me through all the streets, he deposited me very tenderly on the platform of the tapu house, and patted me gently and encouragingly on the back, as I straightway pulled out my sketch-book and began to draw the *city*.

Kerepuna is divided into five tribes and villages, each tribe having its own tapu house, or great meeting-place. The spires of these tapu houses shoot high over the house-tops, with ribbons of grass and palm fronds waving from them.

While I was sketching at a corner of one of the streets, I saw a man come along curiously adorned. His body had been blackened with plumbago and ashes, which was the native sign of mourning, and round his neck and waist were hung the entire bones of a human body, skull and all complete, with pieces of the decayed flesh still adhering to them. On one side swung a female rauma, or petticoat, and altogether he was heavily laden.

As he came nearer to me, with the wind blowing from him, the aroma could only be compared to that of a dissecting-room during the very hot weather, when most of the students are away on their holidays, and only a few enthusiastic ones left to take care of the long-kept 'subjects.'

It was very appalling, and made me for a moment cling to the posts of the platform behind me, while I gasped for breath; then, motioning him to go to leeward, I recovered myself in time to prevent a faint.

He was a widower, and the relics which he carried were all that remained of his deceased spouse, over whose loss he was at present mourning. According to custom he had watched beside her grave while she decomposed, picking out the bones as they loosened from their ligaments, and making a necklace and waistband of them. He had not washed since she passed away, anointing himself instead with the putrefying flesh, as it became 'resolved,' according to the immortal bard, 'into dew.'

'What love,' I thought, as I regarded him, 'this man

must have had for his wife to be able to endure this kind of mourning!'

Then he became friendly, and, as all Papuans do when they like a man, wanted to embrace me. For a time I dodged him as politely as I could, for I did not wish to hurt his already wounded affections. But as he became more demonstrative in his attentions, I incontinently fled up one street and down another, with the afflicted one after me, and all the bones of his wife rattling along with him. I rushed in an easterly direction, for the wind was coming from the east.

These burial customs are the one and only objectionable ceremony amongst the Papuans, for cannibalism is merely a matter of education, like the vegetarianism of the Buddhists, or our half-way habits of beef-eating, and therefore should not be regarded as objectionable excepting to anti-flesh-devourers.

At another place I passed a low covering of palm-leaves erected to shade the three widows of one chief, who had died about six months before. His body, or what remained of it, lay underneath them, with only a plank or two between them and it, and they had not stirred from the spot since it was buried, nor would they until he was thoroughly decomposed. The tribe brought cooked yams to them once a day. I believe, in a case like this, they tossed up as to who was to possess the skull when it was ready for lifting, dividing equally the other bones as they could get them, meantime smearing one another with the awful moisture of mortality as it *thawed*. I observed, however much their sorrow may have been, that they were not too greatly engrossed to notice me, for as I passed three blackened arms and hands were pushed out from the sides, with an action about the moving fingers unmistakable to one who has experienced the crook of a waiter's expectant fingers. I placed a stick of tobacco in each bereaved paw, and passed on my way.

There was one comely youth, of about sixteen years of age, who kept closely by my side all the day, with the most perfect face and figure I ever looked upon. The limbs were slender, but beautifully rounded, with long graceful lines,

and he had a magnificent head of hair, carefully tended. They told me that he was a great scoundrel, and he was handsome enough for anything. I cannot say much of the women of New Guinea, because they were all very shy, except at Moresby and Hula, so that I had not much opportunity of observing them very closely. Those I did see were all little women, but well made when young, with small feet and hands, and pleasant laughing faces. At Hula I did see some bouncing and rather forward hussies, but these were the pupils of Kama, and were not to be taken as samples of the women of the nation, who, as a rule, smile when a stranger approaches, and afterwards run away like startled fawns.

Hula lies about twenty miles from Kerepuna, and is built, like Tapusuli, in the sea, a mile or thereabouts from the shore, raised on high piles. The people occupy themselves fishing and begging 'koko,' from the traders and man-of-war sloops. They have been somewhat spoilt by their free intercourse with the Europeans, and are by far the most mendacious we met.

Indeed, it is extremely difficult to drive a bargain for curios along the coast where H.M. sloops have gone. The people are surfeited with tobacco and the decided advantages which they enjoy under our protection, while the slight meed of justice doled out to them for their many massacres has given them the idea that we are not men, but women in disguise; they say they have no longer any cause to fear the white fellow, as he does not revenge his wrongs, so they have learnt to despise us, and, I hear, have raised a native song, which they now sing, having the chorus of—

Poor white fellow is a woman, not a man,
Very good to eat, but no good at fighting.

This ditty is now chanted throughout the land, and what the 'Marseillaise' did for France during the Reign of Terror it seems to be doing here—directly tending to place the lives of Europeans at the mercy of savages who perpetrate their atrocities under the protection of a foreign Government.

The houses are raised on higher piles than at Moresby, and placed farther out to sea. Like the gondolas in the

waterways of Venice, the canoes, catamarans and lakatoes are constantly on the move, and although the distant reef breaks the full force of the water outside, there is always a sense of motion, light and life, here. The coast-line is flat, and densely wooded with crotons, mangroves, and fruit-trees, with distant ranges of mountains to be seen when ships approach.

Kama, whom we met here, is, in spite of his black-guardism, a very merry dog, who will take his well-thumbed hymn-book, and sing hymns which he learnt at Port Moresby with a comic drawl and upturned eyes, while he cheats the visitor at trade. His history has yet to be written, and also his final doom when his simple-minded countrymen find him thoroughly out; he is very artful, and, as yet, has managed to hoodwink them completely. He is also very adroit, for when, after a few dark hints and suggestions, he gathered that we were after curios and legitimate trade only, he became preternaturally upright and moral in his conversation, driving away the bevy of fair girls from his doorway with a great display of sternness. It was only through Nicholas that we gathered the full extent of his depravity, Nicholas being our pilot and guide in more ways than through the coral hummocks.

Between Pyramid Point, Bootless Bay, and Kapa-kapa, we get a very distinct view of the Astrolabe Ranges looming up in front of the more distant Owen Stanley, which can only be seen from the sea, like Adam's Peak at Ceylon, on the very rare occasions at dawn when the atmosphere is free from clouds.

A coast-line full of bays and promontories, with the ridges of cone-shaped or ruggedly indented mountains piling one above the other, and softened with the curtains of mist rolling upward from the deep hollows and valleys.

Along the shores at times we can see columns of smoke rising behind the lines of mangroves and other trees, where the natives are burning out the kangaroos; or, again, a lakatoo, with its fantastically-shaped mat-sail, skurrying westward on a trading expedition from Kerepuna or other distant villages to Moresby or Motu-motu.

These ranges are densely wooded with forest, broken up with vast precipices of sheer inaccessible rock. As yet the explorer has been unable to penetrate far, or do much of discovery, owing to the exhausting work of having to cut, through virgin undergrowth, each foot of the passage, and the difficulties in the way both natural and from the timidity or unwillingness of the inland tribes. To penetrate the interior of New Guinea successfully an expedition must be large, plentifully provided with money, leisure and provisions, for it can only be carried out by patience, perseverance and time. Thus far explorers have gone out inadequately furnished, and so have been forced to abandon their projects at the threshold.

A peaceful sight is Port Moresby at early morning, with the warm fumes of the hill-hidden sun mellowing the mist overhead, giving rosy gleams to the night clouds melting swiftly out of sight, the land breeze lulling down, and a general sense of waiting for that supreme moment when the disc of light may appear and banish rest.

Far in distance trembling ether, faintly blue and misty grey,
Filled with undulations softened, and mild lights that sunny play :
Shifting from the mid infinite, striking on the upturned sides
Of the crowding herd of cloudlets that along the blue plain rides.

In the middle distance mellow, with its purple and its brown,
Bathed in shadow broad and simple, from the darken'd flanks
thrown down :

Forests, fields, and lanes partaking of the dreamy morning rest,
With each local tint appearing only to the eye in quest.

In the foreground, starting boldly, blades of grass and lichen cold,
Crimson dockens, snowy daisies, with their rounded breasts of
gold—

Tangled tufts of blooming heather, thistles, buttercups, and bells,
Waft away to indistinctness middle space and further fells.

On shore, the dews lie heavy on spider-webs and croton leaves, making the grasses on the side of Mount Pullen moistly grey and the hut tops to glisten white. Two schooners are lying at anchor ; the canoes are creeping out softly, some with sails set to catch the sea wind when it comes, but at



THE GARDENS OF HULA



present being paddled like the sailless catamarans which are carrying wares out of Basilisk Bay. I notice one canoe occupied by girls only. As they wave their hands in passing, I recognise one young lady who has been disobedient to the desire of her stern parent, and who is now being sent to a neighbouring tribe for punishment. She will not consent to marry the young man her father has chosen, but fixes her affections where her sire disapproves, so she has been banished for a time. I hope the change may do them all good.

Mount Pullen rears up behind the native township of Hanuabada, the few European cabins and the mission station where Mr. and Mrs. Lawes teach the native children to speak English and sing hymns. They are very apt at some things, these children, and the stranger can hardly realise that he is in the only land on the face of the globe as yet unexplored, when he is greeted by a chorus of 'Rule Britannia,' 'Wait till the clouds roll by,' and 'Abraham,' from one of the canoes of juveniles rowing past. Next to the mission house, the store erected for the convenience of the few residents by the enterprising firm of Messrs. Burns, Philp & Co., with the house of the store-manager, Mr. Andrew Goldie, naturalist and explorer, greet us; then the shanty raised by Mr. Cuthbertson and his surveying party, and the abode of the brothers Hunter, employed as interpreters, farther on; then the little Government Bungalow, where the resident magistrate, Captain Musgrave, prolongs existence by settling the nice points of native grievances, and which is occasionally honoured by the genial presence of His Excellency the Hon. John Douglas.

This comprises the European element of Port Moresby, with the exception of an occasional trader who chances to put up, or the carpenter and assistant who are busy putting up the first house of the new city, 'Granville,' planned out eastward of Moresby. This house represents the first, and strongest point of law, a jail; as yet there are no jailors and no criminals, but these, with the steady advance of civilisation, will come in good time. The site of the new city is well chosen and ought to be healthy, being to the windward side of the native villages, by which forethought the

present Governor shows his good common sense, the native burial customs more than the climate or soil being the principal cause of the present unhealthiness of Port Moresby.

A little over ten years ago, a voyage to New Guinea meant literally the taking of a man's life in his hand, and risking it. All the tribes are not cannibals, but in those days they were all murderers—that is, they tried to kill whoever landed upon their coast; in parts they killed them through an instinctive hatred and distrust of strangers, in other parts they killed them because they wanted their flesh to devour.

To-day a stranger may travel from the Dutch boundary on the one side to the German boundary on the other with safety, if he does not go with the intention of wronging the natives or infringing on any of their rights. Personally, I travelled over the coast between these boundaries, and without exception was, in every village where the missionaries' names were known, treated with respect and friendship.

I found that they all, whether redeemed from their evil customs or still in a savage state, liked the missionary at Motumotu or Gilé-gilé, as also in the head-quarters, Moresby. If I had space I could fill many pages describing instances of the noble devotion and self-sacrifice displayed by the coloured teachers whom I met at the different stations—great simple hearts who live a life of purity and tenderness, reflecting, every hour of the day, the noble example and instructions of their white leaders. I think on the whole I felt closer to God in the company of these South Sea Island exiles with their little Papuan huts, watching them go about their daily duties in the midst of those savage sons of Nature, than I have felt before or since; their faith was faith unvarnished and utter, their patience sublime to heroism.

Great men, noble martyrs, they go to New Guinea to lay down their lives for the cause of their Master, as their instructors have taught them by precept and practice, and the result has been wonderful considering the time.

The Papuan is a born artist; he likes to decorate himself and all that he has about him, and he has the true antique instinct for lines and colour. Hence he values the limbs which

God has given him, too much to hide them under costume of any sort, and walks in the sun nude, with skin like satin (when in health), clean-cut and statuesque, and like man before his fall, in perfect unconsciousness of anything wrong in his nudity.

He does not require clothes, so he does not wear them; and singular to relate, after the strangeness of the first sight, we do not seem to notice anything odd about his lack of covering. It is all so natural, so unconcerned, that we also could almost drop into the general fashion, only for the glaring inconsistency and whiteness of our skins, which look out of place alongside those beautiful bronze statues.

But although he despises dress, he spares no pains to improve upon Nature according to his lights and tradition. His hair is frizzed, and embellished with flowers and feathers; he wears rings—finger-rings, earrings and nose-bars, armlets and necklaces, in fact decks himself up like the exquisite male birds around him, relieving the dark masses with bright touches so that there may be no sense of monotony. But in these ornaments, as in the colours with which he sometimes paints himself, there is nothing garish or discordant; the Papuan decked up and painted is a picture of unity and harmony.

The woman has her grass petticoat and her tattooed breast which looks like a tight-fitting jersey; the husband is too jealous to allow her to be as he is himself. He alone ordains to be beautiful like the male bird; she is for him only, and not to be looked upon, hence she is dressed.

I have two raumas, or petticoats, before me, the under one of two colours, dusky red and low-toned yellow, the upper one, broad grey and dun-tinted reed stripes. I never saw a gaudy colour all the time I was in New Guinea.

Out of about two-dozen carved arrows which I have, there are not two alike in the design, yet all are lovely and quaint, showing in each line the decorative translation of a natural object.

Their hair-combs and lime-spoons show the same loving, tender work over which time has not been an object. So also their pipes or bau-baus, and lime calabashes, designs worked out without knives, with bits of sharpened shells, or

firebrands, infinite labour, with observation and intellect, guiding the crafty hands, producing results which I regard with great hope for their future, if their white brothers will only be content to lead them onwards.

A pleasant and picturesque place to look at is the native village of Elevara, whether you take your stand on the verandah of the Mission House, and so overlook it and the crescent-shaped bay beyond, broken only by gentle ripples, till the eye wanders to the white foam-fringes which reveal the coral reefs outside, with the dark blue line which shows the trembling waters of the tempestuous gulf, or whether you take your seat in one of the little canoes and paddle, or get paddled, a short distance from the shore, and so view it from the sea.

A picturesque spot to sketch from a distance; although like its sister village, Hanuabada, or Naples, and a number of other places of beauty, it is best seen at a little distance, and with the wind blowing from you, particularly if there happen to be many mourners about, as there are generally, and as there were at the time I visited New Guinea. At such times, to walk with impunity through the villages, I would advise travellers who are at all sensitive as to smell, to carry with them a few cloves, as medical students do. This preventive may help them along, and by chewing, take the keen edge off the perfume about.

The natives of Elevara, who are of a different tribe to, although friendly with, their neighbours, occupy themselves principally in fishing. They barter the fish to friendly tribes inland. The other coast tribe are gardeners and earthenware-pot makers. As a rule, these tribes are very industrious, the villages by day being nearly deserted, except by the old men cutting canoes, the old women making and firing their pots, the children tumbling about the sands, playing at spear-throwing, or wading through the shallow waters, and the mothers looking after their children, the young pigs and puppy dogs, nursing them all impartially and by turns.

As at Kerepuna and other places, here and there you will see some hideous-looking figures, mourners smeared with ashes and plumbago, like darky minstrels, squatting upon

the plank and palm-leaf covered mounds under which decays the relative they have lost, and from which wafts the pestilent odour.

Elevara lies directly under the Port Moresby Mission Station, and nestles at the base of an abrupt rock which juts out from the shore. At low tide you can walk through it to Hanuabada and along the coast dry-footed ; but at high tide, the piles upon which the houses are built lie two or three feet under water, and, with the setting sun going down behind the rock and the huts in sombre shadow, it is most impressive, a purple haze mantling the distant hills and bluffs, the foliage broad and indefinite in masses on the rock above, the canoes half submerged in the waves, and the natives housed—for they go to bed, with the birds, at sundown. There is a solemn silence and repose suitable to the glory of that golden hour. So the sun goes down, and we know that night is upon us by reason of our myriads of visitors, the lively mosquitoes.

CHAPTER L

PORT MORESBY

A Parting at Port Moresby—Mr. Lawes and Father Vergus, the French Missionary—Laws of Permit—Andrew Goldie and his Journal—A Pretty Sunday-school Story.

WE parted with our pilot Nicholas at Port Moresby. One of the traders had died there while we were east, and left his vessel ; so the Governor, the Honourable John Douglas, kindly offered the Greek his choice, either to take the vessel over to Cooktown to the widow who lived there, for a certain sum, or else go as a banished man in the Government sloop to Thursday Island.

The Government had long wanted to catch the wily one on the hop, that they might proceed against him, but without success ; he was too much for them always. But at last Nemesis caught him up. He had taken the fever during his last visit, and spent all his money and provisions

feeding himself and his men ; and so, instead of proceeding on his voyage, he had been forced to sell his vessel to Government in order to be able to pay his debts. We had come upon him at the evil moment when his fortunes were at low ebb, and now that we were done with him, he was offered these alternatives, the former of which he promptly accepted.

‘What will you do when you get to Cooktown ?’ asked our captain before they parted.

‘Marry the widow, and come back again with the vessel ; it will be mine then, you know,’ replied Nicholas, calmly. He accepted his bad fortune philosophically, yet planned out the future like a Napoleon, whom he somewhat resembled in features.

‘But I thought you had half a dozen native wives already, Nick.’

‘That don’t matter. I haven’t got a white one yet.’

So we parted from our worthy pilot, and saw him sail out of the harbour. He was to me a most interesting study. I also said good-bye here to General Ronald MacIvor, the hero of ‘Under Thirteen Flags.’ He had come over from Queensland as the guest of Mr. Douglas, and was then staying with Mr. Andrew Goldie, the naturalist, at the stores of Messrs Burns, Philp & Co., as the Bungalow was hardly large enough to entertain him. He has a commanding figure, and a keen Caledonian eye ; but the foe was unworthy of his steel, for he is a man born for the thunder of war, not the slow duty of an explorer. We spent some pleasant days and nights together, the General and I, out in Port Moresby, and I found him, like Nicholas, a more than ordinarily interesting study.

I met him in London after his and my own return. One day I had gone into the International Club to wait for a friend ; while sitting in the lobby I heard a manly voice, which I thought I recognised, talking about New Guinea.

The subject interested me as much as the man, so I smoked on and listened to all his adventures on that savage soil.

Presently my friend entered, and coming up, said :

'Hallo, Nisbet! Ah! MacIvor, how are you? By the way, you ought to know one another.'

The General turned about and looked at me. Any one who is at all intimate with the General knows that he must be emphatic or nothing.

'Good God, Nisbet, is that you?'

'Yes, General.'

'Have you been long here?'

'For the last half-hour, General.'

'Then damn it, you have heard me tell what I did in New Guinea, and can vouch for its accuracy. Isn't it all true?'

'As Gospel, General!'

'Gentlemen, you hear that now, and Nisbet was there at the time. Perhaps someone present didn't believe me a few moments ago?'

The General and I shook hands warmly, as travellers who had been long parted. Good, brave warrior, may a war break out somewhere soon, that you may have a chance once again to be Generalissimo, and so be able to fulfil that old promise of yours, of appointing me on your staff as war correspondent!

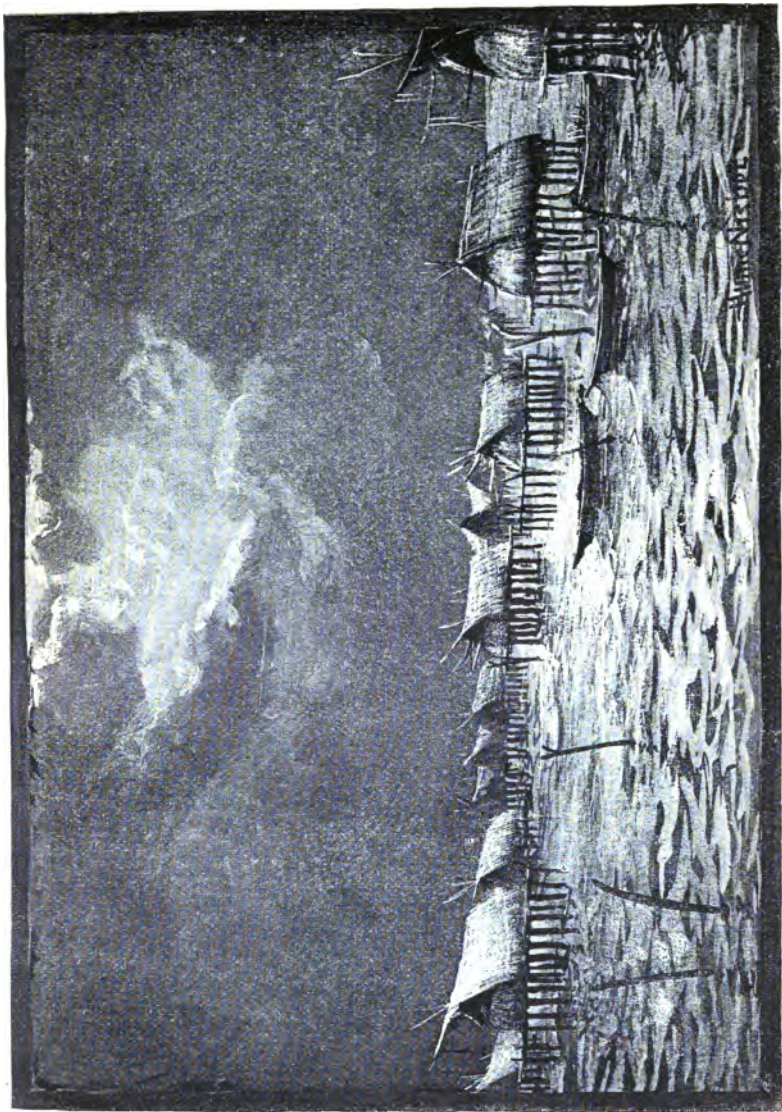
I paid one visit, in as much state as my very limited wardrobe could command, to the Mission House, and Mr. and Mrs. Lawes, who were at home on my return visit to Moresby. I had only one clean shirt, and my visit to the Mission House used it up, so that I was forced to refuse an invitation to dinner at the Government Bungalow the next day; although, as genial John Douglas said when I afterwards met him at Thursday Island, that would not have mattered; still, when one goes to visit the King or his representative, one ought to be able to raise a moderately clean collar for the occasion.

Mr. Lawes is the State Missionary of New Guinea, as Mr. Chalmers is the working missionary. He and Mrs. Lawes had been for a sail round the coast when I arrived the first time, so that I did not see them then, but I had taken the liberty of using their verandah for sketching purposes, which, I trust, when they learnt, they forgave me for doing.

Mr. Lawes is a remarkably good-looking man of the Persian type. Mrs. Lawes has the appearance of an active and energetic woman, one who would not permit much sentiment to stand in the way of what she considered her rights. I fancy that I came with a little prejudice against Mr. Lawes, for I had been to Yule Island, and seen there three of the noblest and most self-sacrificing men I had ever seen in my life before, who for the cause of Christianity had been compelled to steal into the land (over which Mr. Lawes ruled supreme) like thieves, because they were Roman Catholics; and as this kind of bigotry in the nineteenth century makes me turn sick with contempt, as it also would if a Roman Catholic clergyman prevented a Protestant minister from trying to convert savages to civilisation, I was naturally disgusted at the narrow and foolish policy of this autocrat of Port Moresby.

Let me try to give, as I understand it, a fair and impartial record of the case in point. Of course I never attempt to appeal to sectarians, as no man can do such a thing and hope to come out of the argument with *éclat*. I write now for the men and women who seek to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, as He taught them, broadly and simply, without paying any heed to the particular bias of any school.

Mr. Lawes, as the representative of the missionary society, being first on the field, made rules and regulations, which the Queensland Governor sanctioned and endorsed—that no one should be permitted to land on New Guinea soil without a special permit, which is framed somewhat after the order of a Russian permit and passport. As I had to fill up this permit and sign to the autocratic conditions, I speak from experience. At the time I did so I had not visited the land, yet I thought that, as a free-born subject, I had never signed any conditions which gave away my freedom of action so utterly, or degraded me more in my own purity and self-respect. One of the conditions I remember, was that I was not to speak to a native woman while on New Guinea, as if females of New Guinea could not take care of themselves, or the men who visited that quarter of the globe could not behave like men. This is what



KAPA-KAPA, NEW GUINEA



I felt at the time, but when I went to the land and saw how completely the visitor was under the control of the authorities, and how much this power could be abused by those in office, then I felt for the first time in my life like a Russian serf.

Of course, all through these humiliating reflections ran the stinging thought that I had no right as a British subject to sign those conditions—that I ought to have torn up that iniquitous sheet and, after trampling upon the shreds, gone over, and as a protest, landed in spite of the prohibition of those half-dozen representatives. That is what I ought to have done as a Scotchman, and what I feel ashamed to this hour that I did not do; but then I had made myself a slave already in other quarters, so that for the year 1886 my life and the hours were not my own to waste on patriotic sentiment; and thus weakly, for the sake of peace and time, I yielded and signed the permit-sheet of foolish and tyrannical conditions. After doing so I felt as if I had drifted back to the year 1212 before John had signed the Magna Charta, and poetically I felt satisfied that it was Machiavellian if nothing else.

It appears that Father Stanislaus Vergus, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Order, asked for a permit to go to New Guinea in order to propagate the religion of Jesus Christ amongst the natives. The Government Representative at Thursday Island was not in any way averse to this, but the Rev. Mr. Lawes, as the authorised representative of the religion of Jesus Christ on benighted New Guinea, put his veto upon all such rival aid in the good cause, and determined that the natives were either to have Protestantism or else spiritually starve.

From his point of view, as a staunch disciple of Martin Luther and John Knox, I dare say he was quite right to resist, to the bitter end, what is termed the growing influence of the Scarlet Woman of Babylon, but from mine as a humanitarian, I thought him at the time, and still consider him, too absolute and mediæval in his notions for both modern Christianity and the real benefit of the Papuan race, which must be after all the motive which induces Messrs. Lawes and Chalmers, &c., as well as Fr. Stanislaus

and his brethren, to leave the security and comfort of home to suffer privations, fevers, and risk their lives amongst the savages. And so, honouring them all alike for their noble self-sacrifice, it makes me the more enraged that such a trifling blur should have stood in the way of my complete admiration, and the more anxious to wipe it away as quickly as possible.

Fr. Stanislaus, when the permit to land on New Guinea was refused to him on account of his religion, resolved to land with his two companions on Yule Island, which lies at the entrance to Hall Sound, where the prohibitive law was not supposed to extend, it being off the mainland.

This was about the most likely island along the coast for a man to qualify as a martyr upon, for it was the most unhealthy of all. The natives, also, were considered dangerous, particularly since the Italian naturalist D'Albertis had lived there; indeed, a mission station which had been established there once upon a time had to be abandoned as no teacher could live upon it.

This was the poor island which Fr. Stanislaus fixed upon to begin his work in, and which no one surely would have grudged to him, seeing that it had been relinquished as hopeless, by the opposition mission.

He bought a crazy little craft from one of the traders. This was in such a fearful state of decay that, as the trader informed me, no one but a madman would have ventured in it outside the reefs. Then, with his two companions, and one young fellow of his own faith to act as pilot—his sole qualification for the post being that he had once before visited the coast—he set out upon that stormy sea to cross a gulf, pretty nearly always in as great a state of turmoil as the Bay of Biscay. ‘And by Saul! they did it too,’ said the trader to me when recounting the adventure. ‘How they did it the Lord only knows, for they knew no more of steering or managing a craft than an inland baby! They sailed that ’ere old cobble right over the gulf, storms and all, and all that lay between them and eternity in two or three places of her bottom was the three coats of white paint which I pitched into the bargain. Some of the holes you might almost put your head through.

Those of course I covered with a bit of tarpaulin, but the small ones got hidden up with the paint. I tell you what, when I heard that these French priests had landed all safe on Yule Island, instead of foundering, which they oughter have done according to nature, it made my flesh creep and my hair start up, for it seemed to me a clear sign that there was a God arter all and that He was taking care of them.'

They had been about eight months established upon their mission station when I landed at Yule Island. I was met by the Fathers, who showed me over the place, for they had succeeded in winning the confidence of the natives, and held service in a little chapel between the two native villages of Morni-Cherné and Riora-Aremma. Like Mr. Chalmers further east, they contented themselves, for the present, with interesting the tribes without trying to make converts.¹

They were not, however, left to their own devices long at Yule Island, for when Mr. Lawes heard that they had stolen this march upon him, he at once packed off four South Sea Island teachers, with their wives and children, to the old abandoned station, so that they might counteract the *baneful influence* which had crept into the land. This would have been all very well from his side of the question, only that in his haste to plant his men in the field he forgot to provision them properly, the consequence being that Fr. Vergus had to administer the necessities of life to these poor rivals, otherwise they and their families would have died of starvation.

On the day we anchored at Hall Sound, Fr. Vergus and one of his companions were rowed aboard by the four South Sea Island rivals, which surprised and gratified me very greatly to see them living in such unity together. I asked them for an explanation, to which they replied :—

'Massa Lawe he sent us here, but he no send any food ; Massa Vergus come to us and feed us. Massa Lawe may be right, but our bellies say no ; Massa Vergus may be wrong, but all same he save our lives, therefore we like Massa

¹ For further account of missionaries at Yule Island, see 'The Land of the Hibiscus Blossom,' chap. xxii.

Vergus best, and serve him first ; Massa Lawe come along afterwards when he sends us food.'

I do not attempt to make any charge against Mr. Lawes of culpable neglect of these teachers ; it may have been that provisions were scarce at Port Moresby at the time, so that he could not help them. According to what I witnessed myself in other parts, these native teachers have often privations of this kind to endure. Mr. Andrew Goldie, who is one of the early pioneers of New Guinea, confirms me in this opinion, as the following quotation from his Journal, which he kindly gave me permission to publish, will prove :—

'May 25, 1882.—Up to this date' (he is at Dinner Island, where he has heard from the native teacher of a cannibal massacre; the teacher had witnessed the cutting up of a man, and also when he came to the place of sacrifice which was at Milne Bay had seen one with his hands cut off but still alive, crying piteously) 'it is eight months since a missionary vessel paid the teachers a visit. We had brought them stores from the head mission quarters at Port Moresby, which consisted only of one bag of rice for each of them, a few beads, fish-hooks, knives, and trade hatchets. The teachers, in their letters, were informed that the mission stores had nothing else to send them, yet before I left Moresby I had offered the missionaries half a ton of flour, six casks of beef, and what tea and sugar I could spare. But these they refused for reasons best known to themselves, although at the same time they did not hesitate to borrow the same kind of stores for their own private use. I learnt from Tom (a native teacher), at Dinner Island, that H.M.S. "Beagle" had been there a week before, and the captain had asked him if he was in want of biscuits, beef or any other stores, but that he replied in the negative, although he was literally in want of everything. I am aware that these native teachers have instructions to make no complaints to any of H.M. ships. These instructions are only too well carried out, as they have not courage to brave the white missionaries' wrath, which seems to them terrible, and tell the truth.

'Poor fellows and helpless women ! Already over fifty of

them are laid in New Guinea graves, fruit of gross neglect and literal starvation! At one time seventeen new arrivals died within a period of four months, yet still they come; we expect a fresh batch, although by this time they ought to know what kind of fate is in store for them.

'I put some questions to the teacher concerning the fever, if he had it, &c.; he said "Yes."

'Do you take quinine?' I had seen a bottle of it standing. "Oh, that belongs to Chalmers." I told him to use it, no matter to whom it belonged, but he said he did not know how to use it. I then took it, got acid from the ship and mixed up a brandy-bottle full, leaving some acid to dissolve the rest, instructing him how to use it. I do think by this time these teachers ought to know how to use fever medicine, for when one is attacked you cannot mistake the symptoms for any other disease; a few doses of quinine, if taken in time, will soon put you right, but if not taken at once, periodical attacks occur which are hard to shake off. I left the teacher all the supplies and stores which we could spare, viz., two bags of flour, one bag of rice, two bottles of Liebig's essence of beef, tea, sugar, and a dozen of trade hatchets.'

Mr. Andrew Goldie, in 1879, made a most successful exploring voyage round the coast in his vessel the 'Alice Meade,' besides many other voyages, being well received by all the tribes. He is one of the best authorities on New Guinea, having discovered and named much of it, and is thoroughly acquainted with native manners and customs.

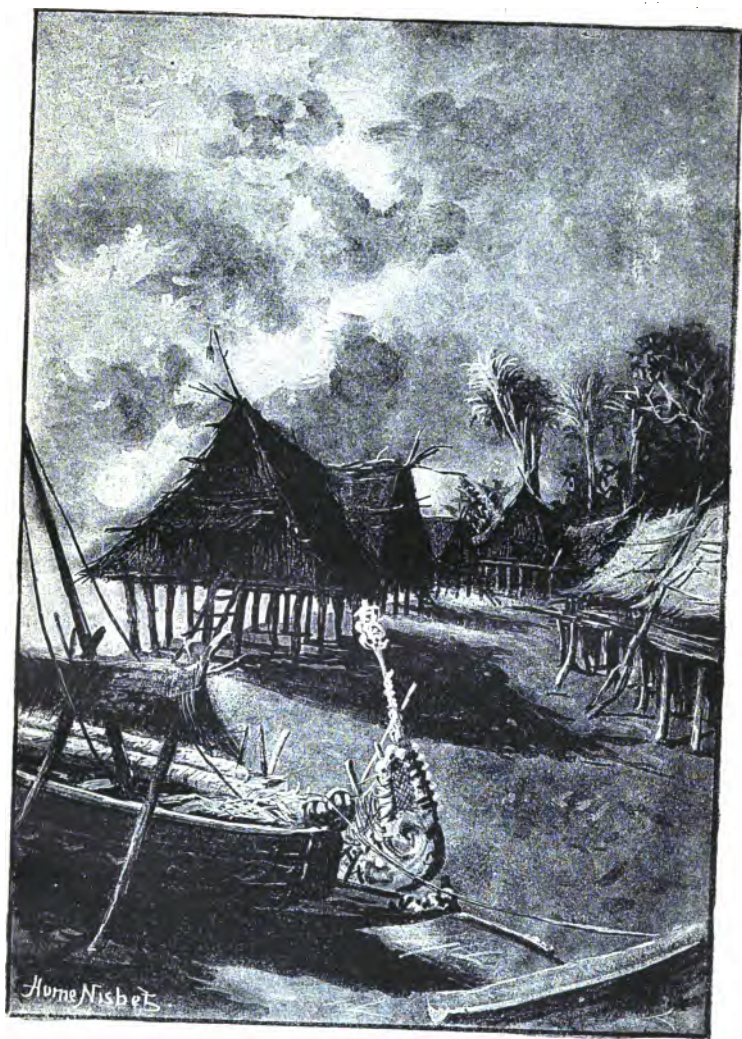
He lives now at Port Moresby, and is the New Guinea manager of Messrs. Burn, Philp & Co.'s stores there, that enterprising Sydney firm being invariably kind and helpful to all explorers. To their kindness alone I am indebted that I was able to go so far round the island, and at so little comparative expense to myself, otherwise my pecuniary losses would have been very serious, or my efforts sadly crippled, as the firm which I then represented repudiated all expenses over and above what I had stipulated for before leaving England; so that I only lost about seventy, instead of three or four hundred pounds sterling, for the sake of risking my life amongst the savages.

Andrew Goldie gave me a great deal of information while

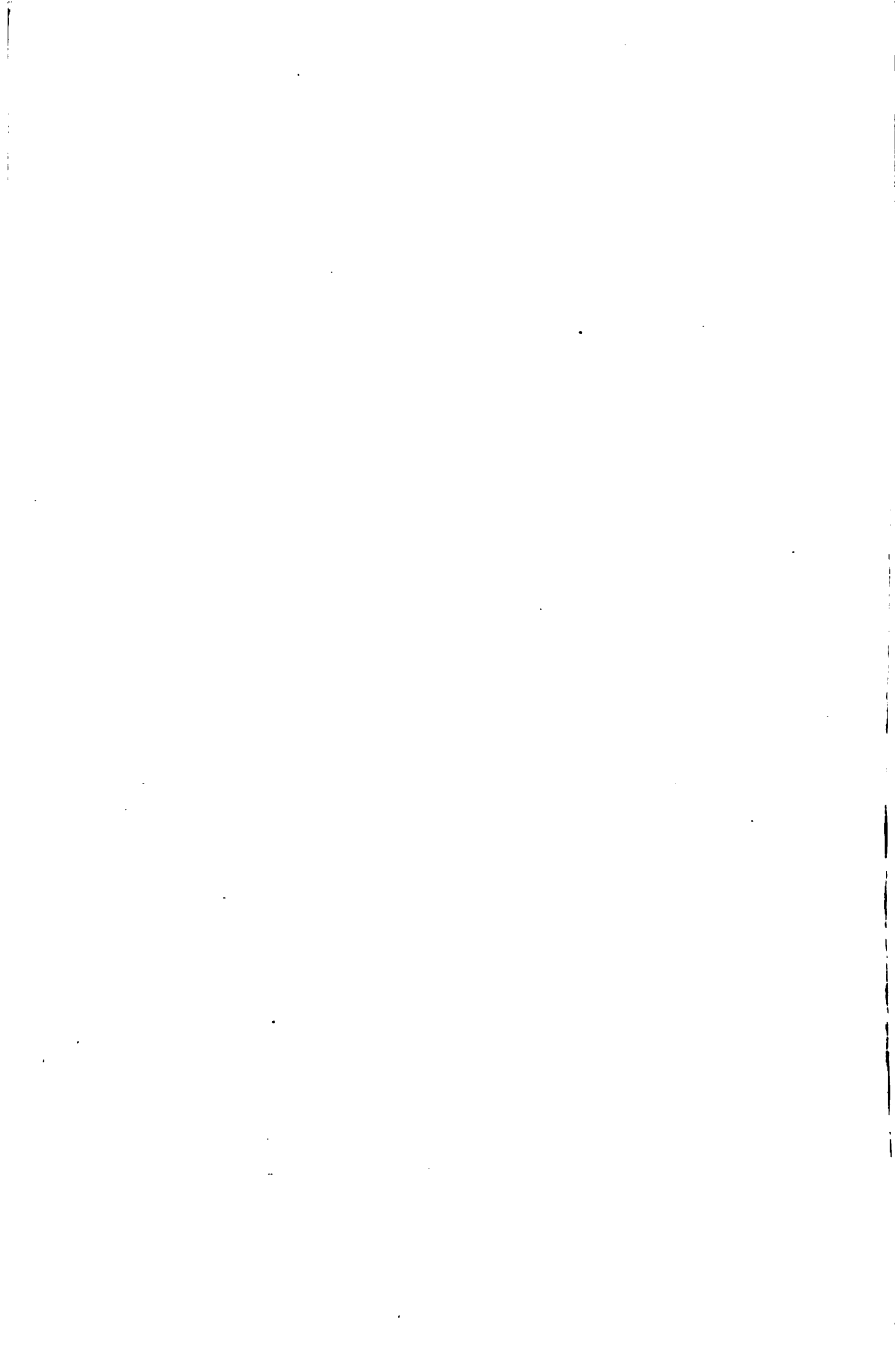
I was at Port Moresby, and is one of the most modest and retiring of men. He is a confirmed bachelor, and does not encourage any of the 'female persuasion' about his place, which fact has been one of the causes of his great success amongst the natives; a most moral, good-living, peace-loving, yet fearless man, from whose lips I never heard either a coarse word or anything at all approaching an oath—which is the more remarkable in a land where the language is apt to be flowery, if anything.

I was very greatly amused one day, while in Tasmania, to read in a missionary record the following tale of savage life. I am sorry to add that this story was related by Mr. Lawes, or at least printed in his name; it was called 'How a Sabbath Breaker was Rebuked.' 'There was a man who kept a store at Port Moresby' (Andrew Goldie is the only man who keeps a store at Port Moresby, so that he might as well have mentioned his name—at least it would have been the most manly way) 'who used to curse and blaspheme awfully, and work all the Lord's Day driving in nails, &c., while the native service was going on. One Sunday, one of the native teachers, who was a strong Christian, physically as well as morally, went up to this Sabbath-breaker and said to him: "How is it that you, a white man, dare to break the Sabbath by working and cursing, while we try to teach the New Guinea men how to keep it holy?" And this blasphemer seeing that the teacher was a strong man, respected him, and laid down his hammer so that it was heard no more at Port Moresby.'

As a missionary yarn this is extremely pretty, but it is too personal considering that it is all a fabrication. In the first place, Mr. Goldie is a Scotchman, and as much a believer in the Sunday as Mr. Lawes himself, also he never swears; in the second place, if he had felt inclined to drive in nails on the Lord's Day, and any ignorant South Sea Islander had attempted to interfere with him, I am afraid that this coloured man would not have been able to conduct services for the next month or six weeks after, for Mr. Andrew Goldie, although a very patient man, is also a powerfully built man and one whom I would not like to cheek up to.



MORNI-CHERN



After I arrived in England, and during the time that the Rev. Mr. Lawes was lecturing in Brisbane, one of the papers of that city published what was supposed to be a letter of mine, running down the missionaries. It was used as a quotation from a Scottish paper as if from a letter of mine there, and after some remarks on my injustice to these self-sacrificing men, asked me, Did I think that I would have lived to tell the tale of New Guinea if it had not been for them?

My attention being attracted to this charge, I wrote to the Scottish paper in question, and got a direct contradiction from it as to this supposed letter. With this contradiction I went to the head-quarters of the missionary society, and offered to give the lie direct to that Brisbane paper, and also demanded the name of my traducer; but I was informed that it was too late for me to contradict the words now that they were published, and my offer was declined.

I now beg to give the lie to that newspaper, and trust that they may reprint this with the name of my traducer, so that I may be able to tell him what I think of dark-stabbing tendencies. I will also say that I endorse entirely what the Brisbane newspaper said, that but for the civilising efforts of the missionaries and traders who had been before me, I do not think that I would have come back from New Guinea to tell the tale; and to my predecessors I am grateful accordingly, not forgetting the careful watch which our Greek pilot Nicholas kept over me with his Winchester while I was in the land.

CHAPTER LI

FAREWELL TO NEW GUINEA

The Islands of Torres Straits—Thursday Island, and once more towards Brisbane.

SAILING westward from Moresby to Motu-Motu we get a good view, from near the native villages of Oriapu and

Jokea, of Mount Yule rearing up behind to a height of about 10,046 feet, as nearly as has yet been judged. Mount Yule is a peculiarly rich hunting-ground for the naturalist, botanist, and geologist, Mr. Edelfelt—a plucky young naturalist explorer whom I met at Thursday Island, making his second trip for the purpose of exploring this mountain—informed me. He was accompanied by his wife, and intended settling, for a time, at Motu-Motu.

Mount Yule is rugged in outline, and as the sea is unprotected about here, rough weather is by no means a phenomenon, for, like the Bay of Biscay, the Papuan Gulf is unrestful, and with strong sun-heated monsoons blowing the ship along and raising the waves till they tumble things about and break along the decks.

As the traveller proceeds inland, he will come across deserted villages, with the houses falling to pieces, significant tokens of the fierce wars waged by the hostile tribes, and the sweeping effects of fever. Some of the houses are raised six and eight feet above the ridges on which they are built, others are perched high between the forked limbs of trees, and are reached by long, roughly-fashioned ladders. In many of those tree-houses he will see sun-dried corpses, grimly waiting, the sole tenants of the deserted homestead. These tree-houses are consecrated to the dead in time of peace, and are used as a place of refuge for the women and children in time of war; they look odd and unsafe at first sight, to the stranger, but after a time he gets used to them and can appreciate their utility amongst a nation where spears and arrows are still the principal weapons. One man on such a height, protected by the twisted tree limbs, has it in his power to annoy an enemy and escape himself; it takes a long time for a stone axe to cut down a tree, while it is much easier and more effective to pitch down a spear than to throw one upwards.

At Motu-Motu, a splendid native town and the direct highway to Mount Yule, we reached the limit of our westward journey. Here we lay for one night before crossing the Gulf and leaving the land where we had experienced so much in such a short time.

We are now returning by Bramble Bay, the Neve Group,

Darnley, York, and other islands which stud the Torres Straits, and where the copra traders and missionaries pretty equally divide the field.

In these islands, as in New Guinea, the rarest of orchids and varieties of crotons grow; there are over twenty varieties on the volcanic island of Darnley, with beautiful blue, green and dark winged butterflies of gigantic size lighting up the dark moist shadows.

We have been a pleasant company through the voyage, and now that the captain has left strange waters he is once more in his element. Although moving a little languidly about the deck, he has steadily refused my medicine, viz., two grains of quinine three times daily in whisky, and I fear that he has caught the fever; but my friend Mr. Vivian Bowden is all right and active, as he has been all along, and the men on board, white and dark, seem glad to be getting back to fresh beef once more.

The sheep we were taking over were the worst off, as we had run short of fodder for the poor animals, so that they had to fast until we reached Moresby; yet we had always been fortunate with our fishing, and got some splendid fish each day as we passed along. All we had to do was to trail a line with a hook at the end without any bait; the fish came and hooked themselves on without any temptation, and delicious eating they were.

I think Darnley Island is the most lavishly fertile of the Torres Straits group, and the natives have some of the most curious customs. They embalm or rather dry their dead, fixing them for that purpose to ladders and setting them in the sun, extracting the moisture from the body by tapping the heels and, most horrible practice of all, catching the 'juice' in vessels as it drips and drinking it.

Two or three native teachers are placed here, with their wives and children, and seem to lead a happy enough life, for the natives are fairly accustomed to strangers by this time; yet I saw one poor young wife dying while I was there. It was a sad parting between husband and wife, for both were well aware that he would have short time to mourn for her, three months being the limit allowed for his remembrance, as after that time of waiting he must marry.

another wife, who will be forwarded to him from the islands by his missionary masters.

The wives are mostly the first victims to the climate of New Guinea, but Goldie told me a strange story of one young Kanaka woman who had outlived all the husbands provided for her, and was still free, young, and attractive.

Murray Island is the station which Mr. McFarlane established—its old name was Meer—and it has a cone of about 750 feet in height, an extinct volcano. There are two other islands lying close to this one, Meer and Dower Islands, the latter 605 feet high and very bald looking.

There is a fine Papuan Institute at Murray Island, which Mr. McFarlane describes fully in his work 'Among the Cannibals.' Here they have succeeded in training the natives of the western districts from Kiwai, Mibu and the Fly River, not only in the English language but in many useful trades, particularly joinery, blacksmith and ship-building work. They have already built a ship, which is one of the prettiest round the straits from Murray Island; the trees were felled, sawn, and dressed by the native converts in their own workshop under the superintendence of Mr. Robert Bruce, a Glasgow ship-builder.

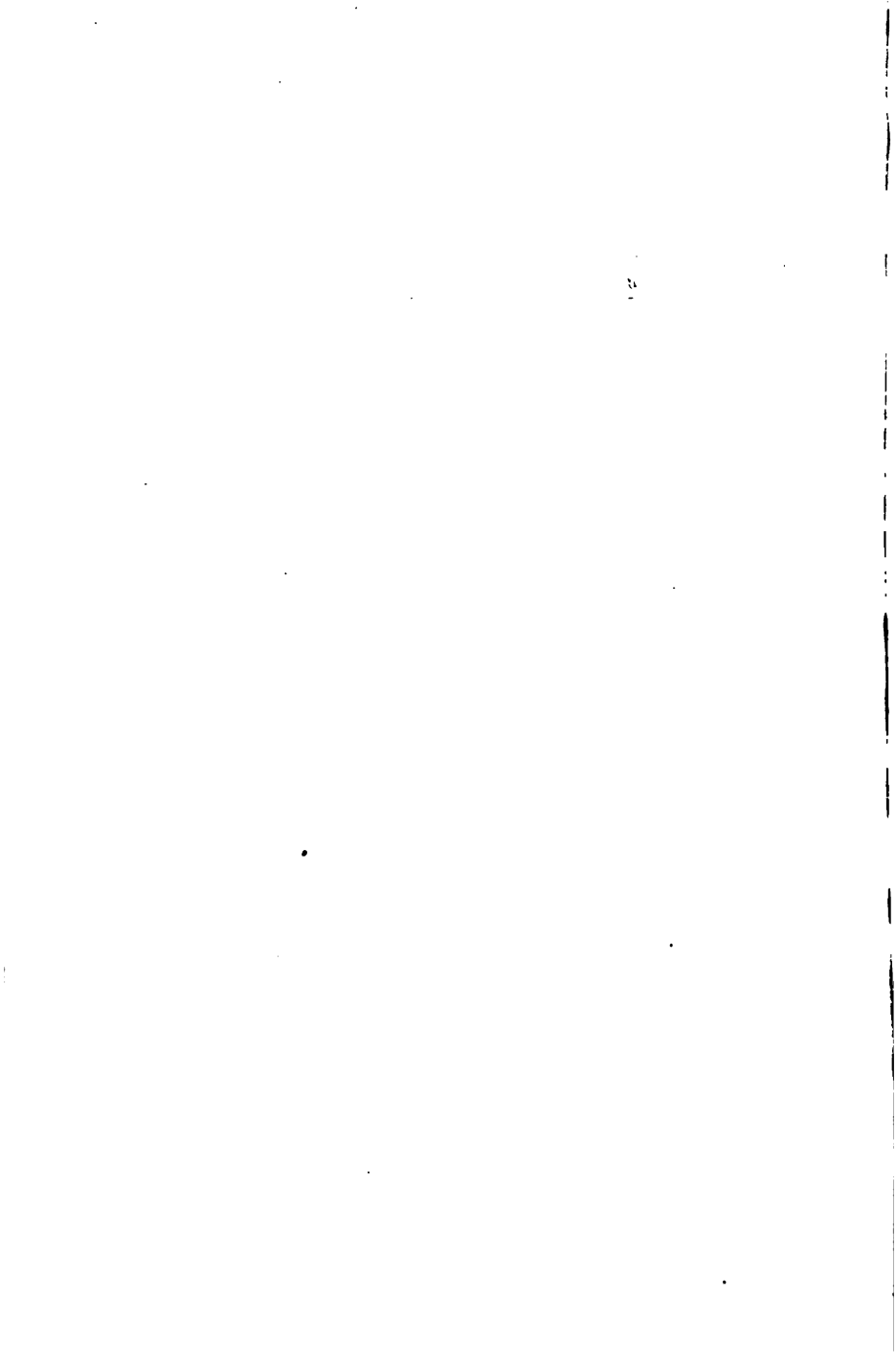
Mr. McFarlane believes, as I do, in the future possibility of the Papuan reaching as high a state of civilisation as the Maori has reached, if not higher; for he makes an intelligent and apt scholar, and does things more from conviction than by imitation.

York Island is low-lying but well timbered, and the natives here, like those on the other islands, are all industrious, working for the traders who settle amongst them. They give their work and he looks after their larder, keeping the entire tribe—old men, women and children—and they all live in great harmony, working cheerfully when wanted by their easy-going guest, who does not bother them as to hours or quantity.

One business they engage upon is preparing copra—that is, they sell to the trader the produce of their cocoanut gardens, cutting out the fruit in small pieces and drying it in the sun, after which it is packed into bags and sent away to make oilcake.



FROM MURRAY ISLAND, TORRES STRAITS



The other trade is with *bêche-de-mer*, a black sea-slug which they fish for, and after drying in the sun, smoke in firing sheds and then send to the Chinese market, where it is much prized in the making of soup. As I have fully described nearly all the islands of the Torres Straits and the copra and *bêche-de-mer* processes in my book 'The Land of the Hibiscus Blossom,' I need not repeat them here.

We lived like City aldermen after leaving York Island, as they had caught a large turtle there which we bought from them, so that it was turtle soup for dinner and turtle steak for breakfast and supper after that, until we grew so completely surfeited with it that even to this day I can hardly hear the name of turtle soup mentioned without a shudder.

It is singular what strange thoughts possess people at times and the odic influence one man's thoughts may exercise upon another. One night, as we were steaming along towards home with the most lovely tropical moon shining above and the half-formed coral islands gleaming like silver bands on the darkly luminous ocean around, I lay with my friend Vivian Bowden on deck, smoking and looking dreamily outward. We had both been for a long time silent, when suddenly he said :

'Hullo, Nisbet ! thinking ?'

'Yes,' I replied.

'So was I, and I bet you a drink that you cannot guess what my thoughts were about on this balmy night—have a try.'

'You were thinking how you could wolf up a beefsteak, underdone, with a pint of stout,' I replied solemnly.

'By Jove ! so I was, but how did you know ?'

'Because I was thinking upon exactly the same thing.' We had not tasted fresh beef for over a month, and somehow the loveliness of my surroundings suggested the subject, so that the silver rays of the moon reminded me of nothing at the moment more entrancing than a silver grill and a juicy beefsteak sputtering upon it.

Thursday Island was as we had left it, with the pearl-fishery owners striving their hardest to keep their own divers attached to them by extra kindness, or seeking to

bribe someone else's diver from him; for this is the principal worry of the owners, how to be able to keep a good man. And all the while these Kanaka masters of their employers strut about with lordly independence and flourish their bank notes in careless unconcern.

It takes a man of great nerve and experience to be a good diver, as he must generally stay in his bathing-dresses, under the water, for about six hours at a stretch. I laughed at an illustration which Cassell's 'Picturesque Australasia' gave of my subject, 'The Pearl-Divers and their Work.' They had some *naked* divers scrambling for shells, and as I hadn't the opportunity of pointing out the great mistake before the book left the Press, I had just to grin and bear it.

No pearl-diver ever goes down in those shark-crowded waters without his diving suit. They screw him into this costume and load him down with heavy weights, so that he becomes helpless in their hands, above water. Then they lift him up and drop him overboard, letting him down gently with a rope, pumping the fresh air into his helmet all the while. When he gets to the bottom he gives them the signal and goes on gathering the shells, the boat above following the direction he is taking below.

No Kanaka diver will trust a white man to stand and work the air-pump; it must be his own bosom friend, for his life depends entirely upon how it is done. Too much air is as bad almost as too little, and if anything goes wrong with the air-pipe, a sudden twist or accidental turn, it means a sudden and horrible death to him. This is their main danger, for the sharks, although they may be attracted round by the smell of the bolt-grease in the helmet, are generally too frightened at the strange looking apparition to come very near. Still there are dangers enough in the occupation for their owners not to grudge them 60% per month and other chances.

In spite of the scarcity of ladies, fashion runs very high and very pure in colour at Thursday Island. In the morning they visit one another in white trousers, coloured sashes, well starched shirts, and Chinese silk coats, for refreshments and cigars. In the evening they knock about, still for refreshments and cigars, in tropic naval full dress,

white trousers, vest, and well starched shirts, finished off by white linen monkey-jackets. They are very generous with what they have in the larder, but sometimes they run short of fresh provisions, and then they have to fall back on tinned meat. I never heard, however, of an instance where they had run out of tobacco or whisky; they are all fine young fellows and good comrades with each other.

McNaulty used to kill a bullock sometimes. When this was done the islanders and surrounding stations immediately got up parties, breakfasts, dinners and supper feasts, in the different houses, and so ate it up before the heat could spoil it. I was at one of these convivial gatherings one night, where they treated me so very well that I could hardly hold my head up the next morning. I fancy that I dined the day after on a soda and a cinder.

When a man gets tipsy, or otherwise misbehaves himself, Mr. Milman, the Government Resident there in place of Mr. Douglas, has a very wise way of punishing him: for the first offence one day's hard labour, without pay, on the roads; for the second offence, two days, and so on. The Kanakas, Malays, and Chinamen don't like it half so well as imprisonment, and seldom repeat the offence.

We had a very amusing Malay waiter at the hotel. His way of describing things was exceedingly funny and much garnished; he would utter the most horrible oaths with such an unconscious air that no one could have the heart to correct him.

When I first got there, a very ill-natured billy-goat used to occupy the back verandah, and any one going out in the dark that way was almost sure to be butted over at the most unexpected moment. 'Billy' was a very old favourite with the landlord, so that the visitors had just to endure the affliction as best they could.

One day, however, we had roast mutton for dinner, a little tough but very palatable, for the cook was a Chinaman, and Chinamen are wonderful cooks as well as gardeners.

After dinner the Malay waiter asked me how I liked dat d——d mutton for dinner, and when I said 'first rate,' he brightened up and grew confidential:

'You know dat dam ole billy-goat dat allays butt, butts at everyone?'

'Yes! too well.'

'Dat dam billy-goat will no trouble any fellow any more in dis hotel—he am de roast mutton.'

The landlord had been short of provisions for his lodgers and had been forced to sacrifice his favourite!

One night while we were all sitting at supper, a young fellow came staggering in very much the worse for his day's visiting, and sat down opposite to me. He commenced to glare and throw out very insulting remarks; he had reached the quarrelsome stage in his cups.

I stood it as long as I could, but at last had to retort, upon which he started up and demanded instant satisfaction.

The weapons fixed upon were revolvers, and the ground the moonlit sands outside. I went upstairs for my weapon, while he staggered out to find his.

Then I came down to the verandah, where I found him waiting for me without his 'barker'; his mood had changed while I was preparing upstairs, and he was now all love and friendship. I was glad of this, for I don't like either shooting or being shot, so that instead of a duel we all had a drink first and a song afterwards.

He sang to us, and I never heard a more perfect or more carefully-trained tenor voice anywhere; it was a delightful ending to a quarrel.

What a host of incident was crammed into that ten days' wait for the Brisbane steamer at Thursday Island. I worked hard all day and enjoyed my evenings with these fine fellows; it was here I finished off, amongst other drawings, that full-page illustration of 'Mount Owen Stanley from the sea,' which I was charmed to observe bore another artist's name on the cover instead of mine when it appeared in print. I am always pleased to see such evidences of honesty—it redeems poor humanity so much in my estimation. I found that my *nom de plume* on this occasion was 'Charles Wilkinson'; but I had many more artistic *aliases* throughout the work, 'Picturesque Australasia,' which tickled my fancy very greatly, and made me think what a funny fellow the art editor must be in his own quiet way.

But the hour of parting had come; one fine morning the 'Alexandra' steamed through the outside reefs into the harbour. She had got a new propeller at Townsville, and was now upon her return journey from Normantown to Brisbane.

I took our poor old skipper down with me to Townsville, where his wife lived. As I expected, he had caught the New Guinea fever, which reduced him in two days' time to a complete skeleton. He put himself under my medical charge at last, so all the way down I dosed him with quinine—he was getting better when I sent him ashore, yet even then he could hardly walk; it would be months before he became his old burly self again.

A friendly shake of the hand with those genial well-wishers at Thursday Island—kindly John Douglas, Mr. Milman, Vivian Bowden, McNaulty, and all the others—and we were once more off on our long journey southward.

CHAPTER LII

ABOUT A VEXING QUESTION

To Men and Women who may wish to Emigrate—Where they should go—South and Western Australia—Queensland.

In England, where only the specially favoured by fortune can afford to live with any degree of comfort, or without the constant worry which small incomes bring to people, the question will for ever crop up, 'Cannot we cure this misery in some way or other?' Then visions of Australasia will float vaguely before the mind; but these, without the necessary knowledge of where best to go, will be apt to end as they began, in airy wishes.

The best man or woman to emigrate always is the one who has been left a couple or three thousand pounds. With this sum in England he is in a worse position than the workman or even the pauper—indeed, the true-born pauper and the wealthy aristocrat are the only two classes to be

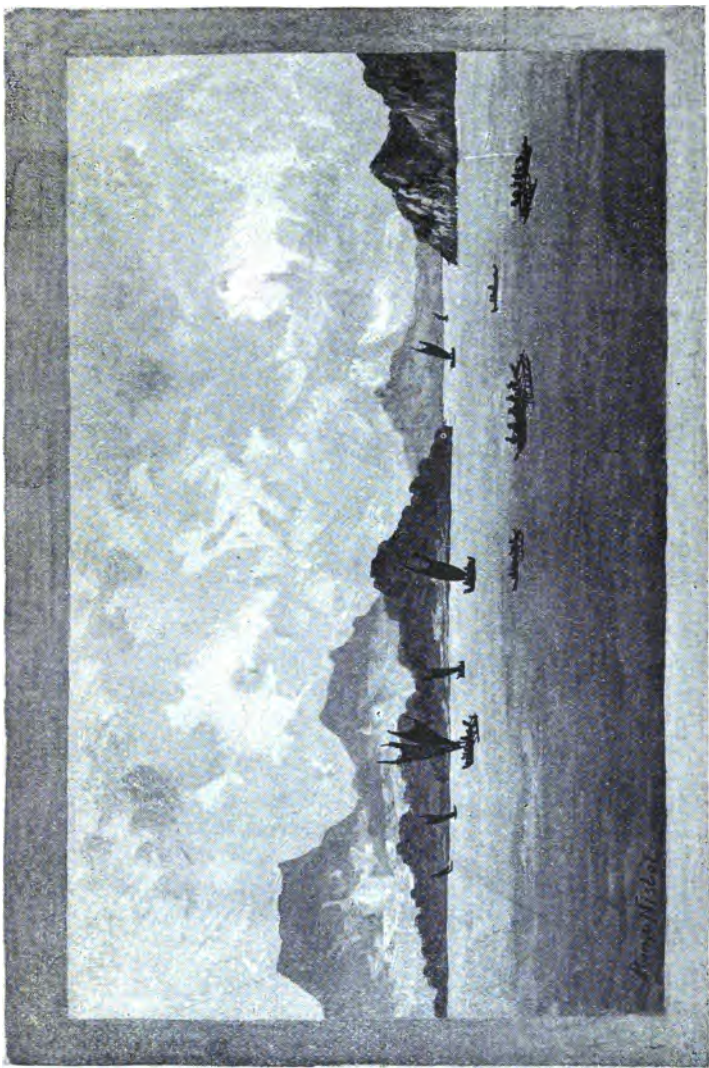
envied in England; all the intermediate classes are merely gradations of self-importance, foolish envy, and undeniable misery.

In a new land, when such a man goes out with his little capital and the strict determination to cast dignity to the dogs and put out his own hand, the moment he takes possession of his land he has leapt to the same social level as his aristocratic landlord at home, and may leave his successors as wealthy, if he likes. Yet while I would like to see as many small capitalists go out to Australia as possible, I look mainly to the workmen and labourers who are here crowded and worked like wild beasts in other lands, but without a hundredth part of the liberty of action that the wild beast has, to form the true backbone of the countries which I am now going to describe in a brief way, so that you may know where to be able to live, instead of taking up the yoke of starvation and slavery.

Let me premise my remarks by telling you plainly, that you will not have to work a whit less hard than you are forced to do in England. Possibly for the first year you may have to labour harder and endure *nearly* as much in the shape of privation. I say *nearly*, because not having the crushing winters to endure which you have here, it is not possible for you to suffer quite so much, even at the very lowest ebb of your fortunes, as you are compelled to suffer for six months every year of your lives in England.

Still, after witnessing, as I did, the true nobility and Spartan endurance of that great army of dock strikers and the devotion of their women in London in 1889, I am not in the least degree afraid to speak out plainly to such Englishmen. If they carry that spirit with them to Australia, the first difficulty in their way will disappear like 'snow from a dyke-side before the sun,' and it is only the first months which are likely to daunt their hearts.

Now all the difference between your hard labour here and your hard labour there lies in this:—In England you must go on working, from the first hour you go into the battle until death releases you, without bettering your condition one iota. You are living only on sufferance, for



MOUNT YULE, NEW GUINEA

nothing here belongs to you. It is not your native land, although you were unfortunate enough to be born and dragged up in it, any more than the plantation ground was the native land of the negro slave who chanced to be born there in chains. In Australia, it may be your native land, for you are landlords of the allotment you purchase, and every year that you labour adds to your own wealth and freedom, instead of making some rich idler richer.

I should like to see England yielded up entirely to its real owners and left altogether to them, and all the workmen and labourers, man-servants and maid-servants, clear out to their own heritage, and so let the lords and their sons labour upon their own lands. If this great time ever comes, then we will see England divided into small lots and put up for sale, and free selectors invited over to take their choice. And so it should be.

I read in the pages of the *Pall Mall* of February 18th, 1890, of a thousand men and women going about destitute in Sydney, which may be true, and will only bear out exactly what I have written in earlier pages. These thousand men and women have no right to be in Sydney, with all those hundreds of thousands of square miles of land lying north and west idly waiting for them and you to occupy and live upon them.

In the Northern Territory of South Australia the area is 523,600 square miles, or 335,116,800 acres, much of it vast rolling downs, wide, well-grassed plains, rich alluvial flats, large navigable rivers, and metalliferous areas exceptionally rich in gold, tin, copper and silver. The principal port, north in the Gulf of Carpentaria, is Darwin, the main inland rivers being the Macarthur, Roper, Summers, Hodgson, Robinson, Goyder Inlet, the three Alligator Rivers, Adelaide, Daly, and Victoria—all great waterways which fertilise the ground!

In this vast area there are to be found waste lands, as there are everywhere, with rocky and sterile ranges, yet no worse than the land round about Sydney was in the year that the first shipload of convicts landed upon it.

I quote here from the notes given by the Hon. I. L. Parsons, the Government Resident in the Northern Territory :

‘It is estimated that there are between 4,000 and 5,000

Chinese, a sprinkling of Malays and Cingalese, and large tribes of aborigines who at present claim the country according to their tribal boundaries; the white population is about 2,000. The mean temperature all the year round is about 75° and the thermometer is never lower than 58°, the atmosphere is heavy and steamy in the wet season, and dry, parching, and malarial in the dry season, so that until one gets acclimatised he must guard against malaria with its fever and ague; this of course, as in all tropical countries, can only be rectified by working the earth, draining, clearing and cultivation. I believe the present difficulty with the land lies in that it cannot be purchased without the consent of the Imperial Government, the conditions of which are subject to alteration according as may be considered fit; but these laws must very soon be altered.

‘The Chinese population are at present cultivating rice and sugar-cane on the banks of some of the rivers. There are thousands of square miles of good sugar-growing land on these banks, also parts where coffee, millet, tapioca and all varieties of tropical products may be cultivated throughout this Northern Territory, from 26 parallel south latitude right up to the Indian Ocean.

‘The land laws are liberal in the extreme; pastoral blocks of land not exceeding 400 square miles can be leased for twenty-five years at a rental of 6*d.* per square mile for the first seven years and 2*s.* 6*d.* per square mile for the remainder of the term; while 1,280 acres can be selected, of the agricultural land, on credit, at a rental of 6*d.* per acre, with a right of purchase at 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre, and any lessee who *bonâ fide* cultivates 640 acres with tropical products during the first five years of his lease is relieved from further payment of either rent or purchase money, and is entitled to a grant of the 1,280 acres in fee simple; any area in excess can be purchased at auction at the upset price of 12*s.* 6*d.* per acre. At the present time there are open for selection or cash sale 240,000 acres.’

I must not forget to add that the great overland Adelaide telegraph line has opened up the land from Adelaide to Palmerston, as it cuts right through its centre for the entire length, over 1,800 miles.

Captain Carrington, who in 1884 explored in the Government steamship 'Palmerston,' has given a good account of the rivers and the soil about them. He steamed up the Macarthur for twelve miles, his ship drawing 11 ft. 3 in.; beyond that distance smaller vessels are required. The Victoria River, he reports, is navigable for vessels of the largest class for fifty miles from the sea; the Daly is two miles wide at its entrance; the South Alligator river can be navigated for sixty miles; East Alligator for fifty miles; the West Alligator for twenty-two miles; the Adelaide for eighty miles; and the others, Roper, Goyder, Liverpool, and King are all good navigable waters, with splendid soil on both sides, easily worked and highly productive, although some portions are at present densely fringed with mangroves.

All that the man with small capital, such as I have mentioned, requires to do, is to fix upon a site as near one of the rivers as he can get, and purchase it upon the working lease. The poor man who has no capital, but who has sinews instead, should get as near to the rich selector as possible, and do sufficient work for him to keep himself while he is clearing the land which he has bought on the credit system. To all I would say, get as far north as you possibly can get, and away from the cities and townships; plan out new towns for yourselves, and the Government will aid you where and when it can. No one need starve on the land, and although, perhaps, for a time, you may have to go about your work in rags, that is no hardship in a country where no one will heed such a trifle or think the less of you for it. Imitate the aborigines as far as you can; hunt and fish for your daily food until you can once more become a white man, which, if you work with a purpose, will not be long.

Western Australia covers an area of 1,000,000 square miles—that is, about eight times the size of Great Britain and Ireland.

The population at present may be roughly estimated at 42,488, of which there are 7,000 more males than females. Nearly a third are located in the towns of Perth and Fremantle, where wages are very good; yet I still must give

the warning—do not cluster or stay in the towns. Clear out to the bush for land of your own.

The country is divided into six divisions, viz. :—South-West, Gascoyne, North-West, Kimberley, Eucla, and the Eastern.

The South-West division is where the population is mostly centred and the land already largely occupied, although not nearly all taken up; where not cleared it is heavily timbered, and when cleared, highly productive. It is about the extent of France, and grows grain and fruits of pretty nearly all kinds, the vine, particularly, being very thriving, and the grapes very large where cultivated.

Farm labourers are much in demand; their wages range from 15s. to 20s. per week with board and lodging.

One of the largest rivers of Australia, the Murchison, runs through the lower part of this division of Gascoyne for over 100 miles from near Port Gregory; the land about this river is good. The other rivers are the Gascoyne and Lyons, which run into Sharks Bay; the land away from the rivers is rich in minerals and is good pasture.

The North-Western division is watered by the Ashburn from Exmouth Gulf, Fortesque, Yule, Shaw, and other rivers, with good alluvial land on either side; the coast line is low and covered with mangroves. It is chiefly pasture land.

The Kimberley division, lately made famous by its gold fields, is tropical and similar in character to the northern territory of South Australia. It covers 134,000 square miles.

The Eucla division is as yet not much known, but from its locality in the Bight and latitude it should be found to be somewhat similar to the upper portions of New South Wales.

The Eastern division is as yet marked 'desert,' that is, it has not been tried; personally, I always feel tempted to try the desert portions of Australia from the wealth that has been discovered in other portions which were a few years ago so termed on the map.

The conditions of getting land in Western Australia

are:—100 to 1,000 acres may be obtained by any one over eighteen years of age at not less than 10s. per acre, payable over twenty years: the purchaser must fence in the whole of the land (one-tenth of it in two years), spend an amount on improvements, in addition to the fencing, equal to the purchase money; reside on the land, or if not resident he must pay double instalments of purchase money. If he fulfils these conditions within the twenty years the land becomes his own; if not, it is forfeited.

It is twenty years since I sojourned in New Zealand, and then only in the Northern Island, therefore I am not going to describe its beauties here. It deserves to have a special book written about it, which I trust, at some not far distant date, I shall be able to do. Indeed, I hope to be able to go over once more, and this time more thoroughly, Australasia and the South Sea Islands, and to give some vivid pictures of each particular locality, more especially those unoccupied portions of Queensland, South and Western Australia, and then afterwards on the return journey be able to come back, recruit myself, and freshen my eyes with the richly-toned emerald foliage of this exceedingly picturesque land, New Zealand.

It may well be called the land of mountain, valley and flood, and even though one of its many strange beauties, the Geysers, with the Pink and White Terraces, has disappeared, and what was once a rare scene of loveliness has now become a dreary waste through that awful upheaval, still it has enough attractions left to lure the traveller fully 16,000 miles to look upon them.

I am doubly fortunate in that I once beheld the terrace and hot springs at Rotomahana, and managed to escape by almost a miracle being there at the moment of the eruption. Now I don't feel as if I'd like to look upon the lake of mud and the awful fissures which were once such a fairy picture.

However, in this chapter I am not describing the beauties of the country, but its advantages and utility to emigrants.

New Zealand is the place of all places for Highlanders, Welshmen, Irishmen or Cumberland farmers to settle upon.

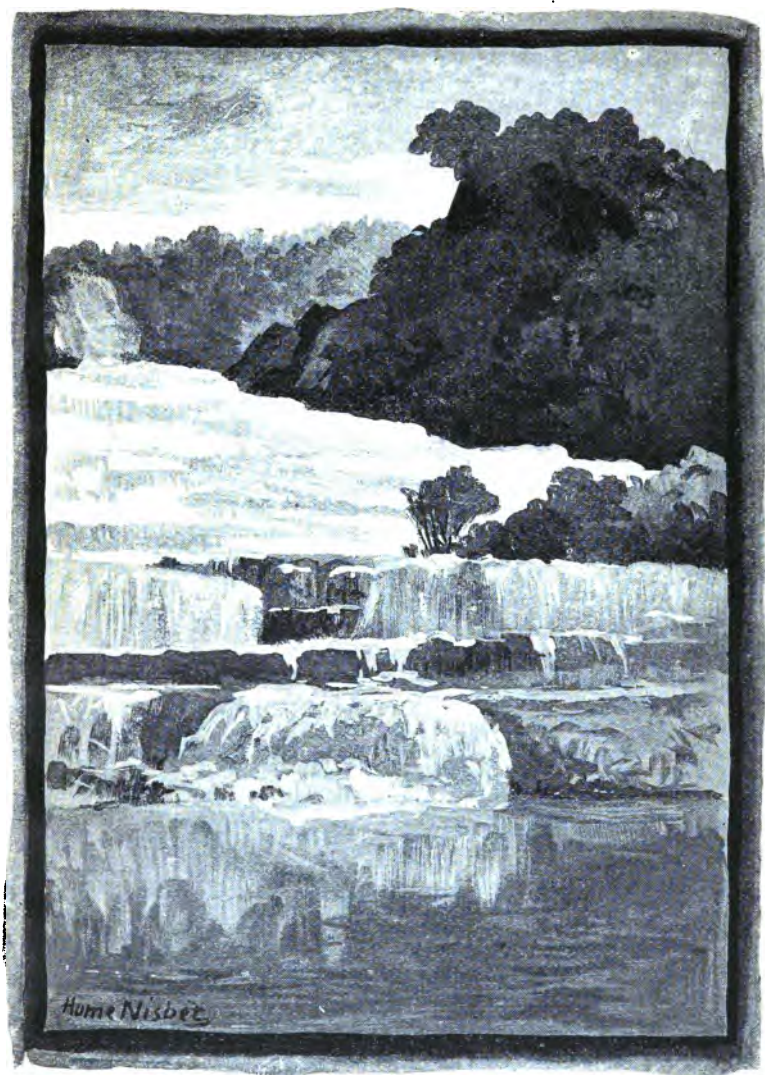
They will find both mountains and valleys enough to satisfy them, with gloomy passes, deep lakes, lofty waterfalls, mist, rain, cool weather and all that goes to make up their idea of Paradise. It is as if all the tit-bits of Scotland, Cumberland, Wales, and the Emerald Isle had been carted off to a southern latitude and planted down there, with suggestions besides of the blue Danube, Switzerland and the Rhine mysteries over all.

At the present time New Zealand is rather heavily taxed, as it is deeply in debt compared with some of the other colonies; yet there is no portion of it, north or south, where a man may not live well and thrive in spite of the burden which he must help to bear. Land, where it can be sold, is sold at low prices to settlers, although a great portion still belongs to the original owners, the Maoris; in such cases it has to be leased at the rate of about 4*d.* per acre, but this, if the holder stays, may become his at any time, as these lands are constantly coming into the market.

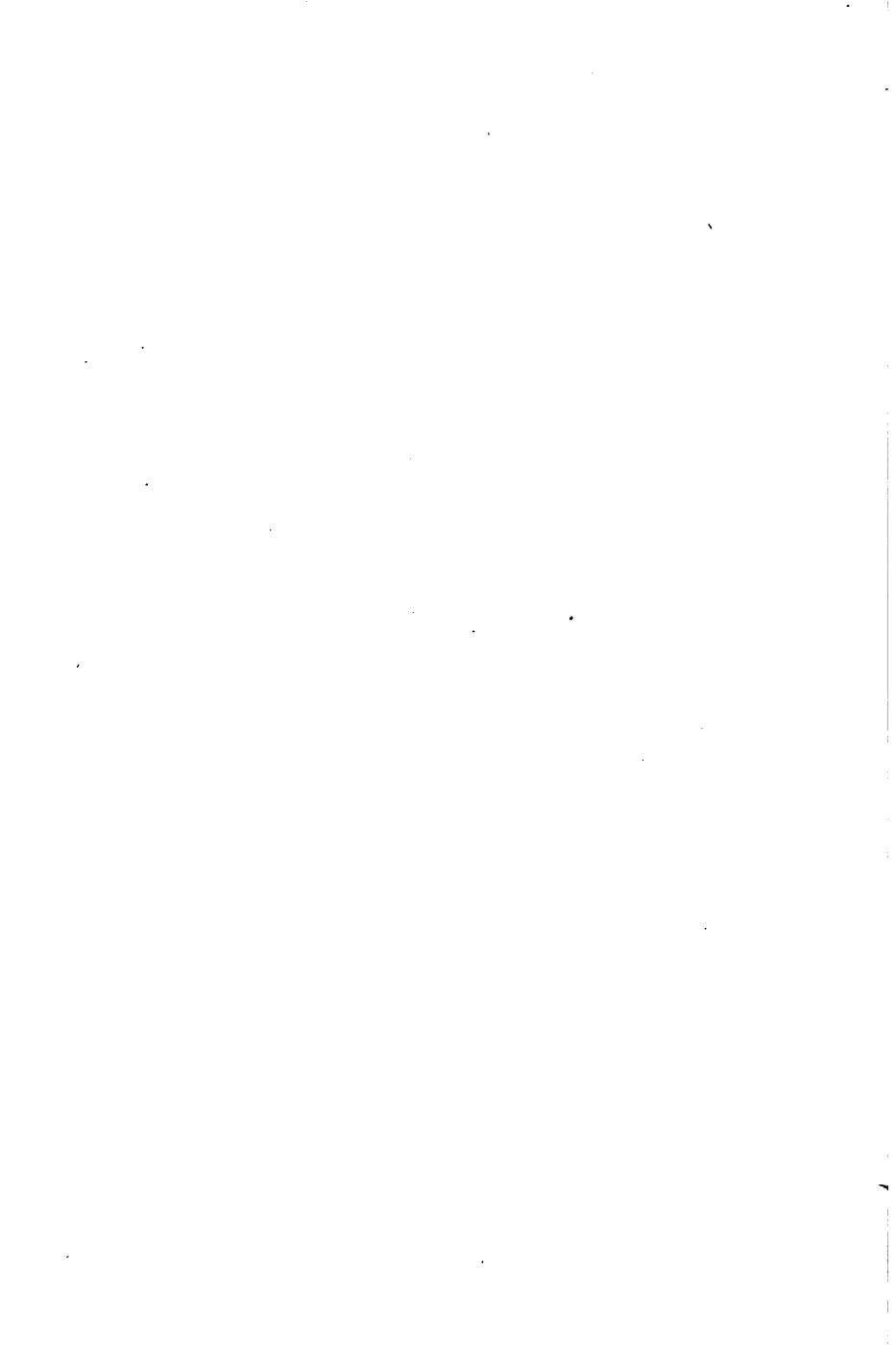
Assisted passages are still given to emigrants, who are advised not to rush into farming for themselves all at once. Let them wait a year or two and look about while working at anything that turns up, and so get accustomed to prices of things and colonial customs. There are always coming into the market second-hand farms and selections where the old owner may have got tired of the locality and wants to shift, which seems a kind of chronic state with many of the settlers. New Zealand is of all the colonies the one with the most hopeful future, and the best climate for Englishmen although it has not the extent of Australia.

For the man who wants to live a quiet, peaceful life, free from excitement, and to make a homestead as nearly approaching his ideal of what English homes might be if he could become a perpetual landlord, New Zealand is the place to go to. He will not become wealthy so quickly as he might in some parts of Australia, but he ought to get contentment and freedom, and his family will certainly gain health and happiness.

But if he wants an active life, with plenty of excitement and the prospect of a speedy return for his labour—that is, to make and leave a fortune behind him—I would advise him



WHITE TERRACE, NEW ZEALAND



to fix upon Australia—the lower portions of the Western or Southern parts.

If again climate is not so much the consideration, or if he would like to live the tropical life of a planter, which has its many fascinations, independent of the attractions and certainty of wealth, then let him fix his mind upon upper Queensland, the northern territory of South Australia or the Kimberley end of Western Australia; there he will find all his desires gratified in rich foliage and luscious fruits, with an ardent sun for ever blazing overhead.

One thing all will get wherever they fix upon—light and sunshine. When they leave the English Channel they may say good-bye to fogs, famine, caste, contumely, and all the special horrors and miseries incidental to good old, used-up England.

CHAPTER LIII

TASMANIA

Prisons and Prisoners—Hobart—To Launceston—Bischoff Tin Mine
—A Launceston Sage—To Sea.

I FOUND a great bundle of letters waiting for me at Melbourne when I got there. They had been forwarded from Queensland, and as the agent had written on the backs of them: 'To be returned if not called for in three months' time,' I suppose he gave me that limit, if I was not eaten by the cannibals.

I had hardly time to glance over them, however, before I was once more on the way to Tasmania, that garden of Australia. My editor wanted a few sketches of that island, and of the Alps, since he could not send me to New Zealand. Orders had arrived that it was not to be done, enough photographs having been obtained to serve the purpose. I think that I could almost have foregone the beauties of Tasmania and the grandeur of the Victorian Alps for a rush once more over Maori-land; but I am a very good

soldier when under orders, so off I started to make the most of the six weeks still at my disposal.

Tasmania is about one-sixth part smaller than Ireland, and a little larger than Ceylon. I don't exactly know why Ireland and Ceylon should be clubbed together by way of comparing size, unless it be that both islands are considered to be gems in their way, Ireland as the Emerald of Britain and Ceylon as the Pearl of India. Tasmania may be termed the Ruby of Australia in commemoration of the blood which has been shed there in past times; now it is as sleepy as a cat gorged with mice.

A wild and rugged coast all the way round from the Furneaux Group in Bass Strait to Hobart—an historical coast where almost every promontory and bay has been the scene of a tragedy, for Van Diemen's Land is more renowned and remembered as a place of horror than even as a health resort, beautiful and healthy as it undoubtedly is.

I did not think so much of the gardens, orchards and lovely women I was to see there, as of the olden convicts, to whom this land meant Hell. My mind was so morbid about it, that the whole place seemed to reek of abominations and cruelties, and the echoes to be filled with the ringing of fetters and chains. Marcus Clark and his awful, realistic story, 'His Natural Life,' must be held accountable for this state of my mind.

I wanted to see the prisons and ancient prisoners more than the picturesque Cape Pillar; and also to visit Port Arthur, Hell's Gates and Sarah Island, and look on the horrible convict jailors and the victims driven mad by their awful torturings; before I left the land I saw the grim originals of this weird romance and felt satisfied.

Hobart is a beautiful place, in spite of its evil reputation, with Mount Wellington rising up behind it, its top covered with snow. After New Guinea I could hardly stand the cold. Although people were saying it was a nice warm day, I felt the wind piercing as it blew up from Storm Bay and ruffled the fresh waters of the Derwent.

In the olden days the most refractory criminals were sent from Sydney to Hobart, and there the blackest

amongst them were picked out and consigned to Port Arthur. After Port Arthur no man or woman wanted or was fit to live; I think even the devils in Hell drew the line at passengers from Port Arthur—they had a special limbo of their own prepared, where they might be kept apart and so not be able to contaminate the fallen angels.

I got a warning from the friend who met me at Hobart that it was not considered 'good form' while in Tasmania to say anything about transportation, as one never knew whose feelings he might be wounding by alluding to the subject; so I took care to be always on my guard.

They were all most hospitable and kind to me whilst at Hobart; too kind indeed seeing that I had such a short time to spend amongst them, for they could not get to understand that I must work hard. Time was made for slaves, not authors and artists, they said, as they poured invitations in upon me all day long which I was forced to decline, being a slave. They told me to take my time and do the thing well, for I could not see their island under three months at least, gave me long notices in their papers, and made me an honorary member of their clubs; in fact, they so covered me with attentions that I was forced at last to take time by the forelock, and abscond from their midst, else, I think, I would never have got away at all.

And yet I would have liked to have stayed there for a long time, for the town is so cleanly and quiet and its surroundings so rural and homelike, with hedgerows of hawthorns, and gardens of apples, pears and cherries, and so much to be seen all round. The natives are so civil and so scrupulously honest in their habits that no one ever thinks of locking their street-doors at night; housebreaking and stealing are crimes unknown. As they told me, there was no use stealing at Hobart, as there wasn't a single receiver or even pawnbroker in the place, whom they could take the goods to. This is one of their proud boasts in this city founded by housebreakers and felons.

I paid a visit to Mrs. L. A. Meredith, the aged authoress of many Tasmanian books. I admired her really very fine flower painting and the great botanical knowledge which

these drawings revealed. She has written some works both in prose and verse which will not let her be forgotten by her grateful countrymen. I trust she has quite recovered from the bad mood she was in the night I spent at her house, and has long ago forgiven the stranger who had only admiration for her, and tried to do his best with her dearly-loved country.

I received great assistance from Mr. Justin Brown, who showed me some of the oldest newspapers and records of the town, also from Mr. Morton, curator of the museum there, an old New Guinea explorer; and indeed by all I was treated much better than I deserved.

I have also to apologise to Miss Mitchel of —, who kindly sent and gave me the use of her sketches of the west coast, not only because some of them were not used, but also because, like many of my own works, the sketches which were accepted and used were not only unacknowledged in 'Picturesque Australasia,' but appeared with other artists' names upon them. I trust this lady will free me from all blame in this matter, as I wrote her name on each of the drawings, with full instructions to the printer, when I sent them home. Why they appeared in the form which they did is one of the mysteries of the art department, over which I had no control.

The town of Hobart forms nearly a square in shape and is built on a number of hills, so that there is a good deal of stiff climbing to be done going over it. It covers over 1,270 acres, and has a population of about 28,648 inhabitants. It is well endowed with churches and charitable institutions, and has, for its size, few public-houses. The ladies predominate—I suppose because the young men mostly all go to seek their fortunes elsewhere; they are all healthy and nearly all pretty, and welcome eagerly the advent of single young men. Hobart in this respect resembles a well conducted seminary where good wives are being educated for sensible men, who ought to visit the country once in their lifetime at any rate; they will be difficult to please if they go away without becoming Benedicts.

The Cascades is the place where the insane convicts are kept. Most of these are relics of the olden times; nearly the

whole of them have been made imbecile by the cat and other tortures inflicted upon them. It is a soul-depressing place to go through ; one of the idiots there, named Roland Rooney, had received as a single sentence 15,000 lashes of the cat. The worst of the convict-floggers, also insane now, was dying when I saw him—a grave-looking, long-faced, melancholy man who might have passed for a revival preacher. Rooney's back was so tanned by repeated floggings that when this extraordinarily severe sentence was passed on him he laughingly said, 'Give me a chew of tobacco, gov'nor, and make it another extra thousand.'

Before leaving Hobart I went up Mount Wellington, which overlooks the city, 4,166 feet, had a splendid view of the surrounding country from the 'ploughed field,' and saw some magnificent bush scenery on the way up ; I also drove along the Huon River and Brown's River, where the trees surpassed even those in the mighty forests of Gippsland.

The railway line from Hobart to Launceston is one succession of splendid pictures of mountain scenery, with a great number of townships on the way both to right and left, all filled with the history of early struggles of the pioneers—wars with natives before they were exterminated, and bloody bushrangers before peace settled down so completely over the land. I passed Jerusalem, Jericho, Oatlands, Tunbridge, Ross, Campbelltown, Cleveland, Epping Forest, Evandale, St. Leonards, and lastly Launceston on the beautiful Tamar.

Launceston is 133 miles from Hobart by rail, and about forty miles from the mouth of the river Tamar, and lies in a valley enclosed on three sides by mountains known as Windmill and Cataract Hills, where the rivers North and South Esk join.

A short distance from the town lie the Cora Linn, Devil's Punchbowl, and the Cataracts, where the scenery is really grand in the extreme, with the river foaming over the rocks and rushing along the deep gorge towards the Tamar.

I went to the Cataracts with the governor of the gaol at Launceston and my landlord, and afterwards over the gaol and invalid depôt. Judges and governors of gaols have now an easy time of it in Tasmania. There were only

three prisoners at Launceston Prison when I was there, and these had been the only ones for a month past ; one a shoemaker and Salvationist who had been tripped up by the arch-enemy in the shape of a bottle of rum, and the other two very small boys who had been caught robbing an orchard. This prison was a model of cleanliness and comfort, so much so that I wondered there were no more applicants for its friendly shelter.

But that it had not been always so I had ample proof of in the rows of heavy ankle-chains hanging about, some of them weighing from fifty-six to seventy-five pounds--a heavy load for a man to carry about all day while working on the roads.

How these criminals ever made their escape it would be hard to tell ; a gang would be making a road when suddenly one would break away and run for it. Mr. Foster told me of one incident where the man had scrambled up a ten-foot wall during the daylight with heavy chains upon him, and rushed up the sides of the Cataract rocks with the soldiers' bullets playing about him ; several struck him, for they traced him by his blood afterwards into the bush where he managed to evade them. He was absent about ten days and then returned to give himself up, with the chains about him still and his prison clothes in rags. He had not dared to show himself anywhere, and there was no chance of getting from the island, so he came back to his punishment a living skeleton, not having tasted food the whole time. They fed him, cured his wounds, and, when well enough, gave him the lash ; that little escapade of his would take from him his chance of a ticket-of-leave.

At Hobart Gaol I saw a convict, with a most fantastic dress of bright red and yellow ; he was an habitual prison-breaker, so he was dressed in this gay fool's costume that he might be the more readily noticed.

In the depôt I saw many old convicts spending the remainder of their lives in clover after the hard lives they had gone through in their early days ; they had everything they desired, and could go and come as they liked. The prison at Launceston is no longer a place of punishment, but home, sweet home.

Of course I could not go all over Tasmania while I was there. I went to St. Mary's Pass, a wildly romantic place, and to Mount Bischoff and Waratah, the wonderful tin mountain of Tasmania, which has done more to enrich the country than any other discovery, and where the supply seems inexhaustible. Mr. Birchell, of Messrs. Walsh Brothers & Birchell, publishers, took me over the tin-smelting works, and showed me the men melting the raw material and pouring it into the moulds like gleaming silver.

But where I could not get to about the island Colonel Aitkenson, editor of the *Launceston Examiner*, and who is one of the best of photographic artists, very kindly gave me photographs of, with permission to use as I required.

My landlord at the private house where I put up was a very wonderful man. He had retired from business with plenty of money to keep him, but spent a good deal of it in building a house like a hydropathic establishment, as large as a barracks, on one of the most perfect sites of the town, where, from one of the upper verandahs—for there are three tiers right round this magnificent house—the visitors may look over the River Tamar winding and twisting along the distant green plains for nearly the whole forty miles.

They were all young men located here as lodgers, for Mr. Foster was very particular whom he accepted as his guests. I was compelled to report myself thoroughly before he consented to receive me and my hold-all, but after I had satisfied him he treated me like a son; we were all brothers in that establishment, and splendidly coddled up for a reasonable fee. Mrs. Foster made the finest pickled onions in the world; they were like an exquisite fruit, so that I longed for supper hour to taste them again. She gave me a recipe, and I am seriously thinking of starting on a large scale as a pickled-onion manufacturer, for if I can only turn them out like Mrs. Foster, then Mrs. Lazenby may retire as soon as she likes.

If ever any of my readers visit Launceston, let them hunt up Mr. Foster of — and try to get into his charmed home-circle. If they do, they may congratulate themselves on two things: first, the comforts they will enjoy; secondly, the respectability of which this enjoyment is a sure voucher.

Whatever your sisters may say about you at home, you are a moral young man if Mr. Foster takes you into his comfortable boarding-house.

There is another establishment at Launceston which is well worthy of a visit, Ackerman's Exhibition, Hiring Depôt, and Bathing Establishment, which has the motto, 'The Poetry of Science, and Music of Motion.'

I did not see any hiring or bathing apartments while I was there, but I found the philosopher at home amongst his discoveries and mechanical toys. I expect the bathing was a gentle lure to draw visitors inside to be enlightened upon scientific mysteries, for during the half-hour I passed listening to his explanations of the conic sections, and watching the perpetual motions, earthquakes and submarine explosions where the earth was made to record her own vibrations, the crystallisation with polarised light, and evidences of things unseen, I saw nothing of it.

He was intensely in earnest this aged sage, and impressed me with that if with nothing else; also his charge puzzled me considerably. It was 2s. per half-hour for a single person, but if married only 1s. I got my half-hour of the wisdom of the spheres for a shilling. He asked me to look at an animal with a thousand heads through the microscope, and promised me a new hat if I could capture one. I gave it up, and after getting as much of the wonders of organic and mystical Nature explained to me as I could take in by means of little wooden dolls, I departed as gratified as if I had been to a lecture at one of the young men's mutual improvement associations. His artificial rainbows did not strike me, however, so greatly as did his description 'the Moon in full dress paying her respects to Jupiter'; as a metaphor that line sent me away deeply pondering.

The population of Launceston is 17,715, and the area of the town 3,340 acres; it possesses a free library containing nearly 11,000 volumes.

After seeing all that there was to be seen at Launceston, I once more took the train for Circular Head, after which I returned to Formby, Port Frederick, whence the steamer sailed for Port Phillip. A rush past ploughed fields and

distant mountains, then we steamed out past Formby Beacon and House Top into a very rough sea. The old Bay of Biscay sensation was on me once more, so that I had to shut up my note-book and hasten down to my berth; my next appearance was at Yarra Wharf.

CHAPTER LIV

THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS

Feathertop, Baldy—Razor Back—The Dargo—Omeo—Kosciusko—
The Murray Gates—Drive to Bairnsdale and End.

I COULD not have ended my long journey in a better way than I did when I wound up by taking the Alps, although I must confess it was undeniably hard work; it was like ending a book with a grand climax. All the rest of the scenery (leaving out Peter Botte and the Owen Stanley ranges) seemed like lesser incidents leading up to the big scene of all, which is brought before the spectator with a bang and left at that for him to digest.

I took the train to Beechworth Junction, by Kilmore, Tallarook, Mangalore, and Benalla. How well I remember a long tramp which I had once to Kilmore, when all the stock-in-trade which I had to carry me along was Boucicault's song of 'Pat Molloy!' Yet I found it carried me very well along, as most of my entertainers were Irishmen; however it is a story which must be reserved for my next book, 'Tales of an Australian Tramp,' as it properly belongs to that nomadic order.

From Beechworth I went to Myrtleford and stopped the night at the comfortable little hotel there. I would like to have said 'slept that night at Myrtleford,' but as a quartz-crushing machine was in full work at about ten feet distance from my bedroom, the walls of which were composed of weather-boards, sleeping was an utter impossibility.

What a most infernal din those heavy stampers made

as they pounded the quartz lumps into fine powder! It felt as if my head was under them and they were grinding my thick skull into dust in their vain attempts to extract gold out of my worn-out brains. I say vainly attempting; for how could these senseless steel crushers get out of my brains what I have tried for years to get without succeeding? Every instant throughout that long dark night I sprang up with a fearsome start as the stampers came down, with my heart responding, in wild thuds, to each of those thunderous smashes.

'You could not sleep much last night I fear,' said my kindly hostess as she spread the table for breakfast and observed my wearied appearance.

'Does any one ever sleep in Myrtleford?' I asked her, amazed that she should think such a feat at all possible.

'Oh yes, we always are able to sleep while the machine is working. It is only on the Sunday nights that our rest is at all broken; the unaccustomed stillness when it is not working disturbs us.'

From Myrtleford I drove by coach to the mountain-surrounded township of Bright. The driver was a Dane, weather-beaten and sun-tanned, with a keen blue eye and a fund of racy stories. By the way, I noticed a singular colonial habit while I was going by train, that I did not exactly admire, the 'jumping' of seats. Once I was in a crowded train, where some of the passengers had to stand; a lady opposite to me was sitting with her wraps on, and getting wearied she got up to lean for a moment out of the window, leaving her wraps on the seat; immediately a young man who had been standing, stepped over, pitched the wraps to the floor, and sat down; and the strange part about it was that neither the lady nor any of the other passengers seemed to think it unusual, or that he ought to have been kicked outside; she merely picked up her wraps and stood holding them in her hand, but showed great surprise when I rose up and offered her my seat. However, this happened in a third-class compartment, and the young man was a lout who mistook unmanly vulgarity for independence, and I only saw it occur once. As a rule the roughest colonial is a gentleman, although the law of 'jumping' is considered as



VICTORIAN ALPS : MOUNT KOSCIUSKO

one of the colonial rights, and not to be disputed when it has been successfully accomplished.

I passed the Buffalo Ranges, rugged and grand, with the Bogong, where live and breed in perfect freedom large droves of wild horses who have never known a shoe or a saddle. They are magnificent and ferocious beasts, who have been foaled from wild mothers and untamed grandmothers, and through living constantly upon the mountains have almost changed their original natures and become like panthers in their spring and sureness of grip as well as their untamable savageness. As yet none of them have been caught alone, for no trained horse can take the heights or wild leaps over gorges that they can; sometimes they are seen bounding along the mountain tops from rock to rock, like the chamois of Switzerland, with their long manes and tails flying far behind them. The Houyhnhnm is here seen in his full perfection and wonderful grace; he is descended originally, many generations back, from stray horses that have wandered and lost themselves in the mountains.

I passed lovely bends of the Ovens River with lofty waterfalls, such as the Eurobin, falling and splashing over the rugged precipices and getting lost to sight amongst the giant gums and ferns, and then I came to a Chinese town, with its Joss-house and all complete.

Artful fellows these Chinamen are, and great favourites with the colonial girls. They are not allowed to bring Celestial houris with them, so they have to get white wives, and as they are invariably model husbands, being gentle, easy, generous and complaisant, they get the very pick of the bevy. When a Chinaman lands in the Colony he at once begins to save up his money in order to *buy* an English girl, and after saving enough, he goes to the father and mother and gives them a good lump-sum down to be allowed to court their daughter; few of the girls say No to their suitor, as he lets them do what they like after the wedding, and never interferes with them or exhibits any disagreeable jealousy. One night I sat in the pit of a theatre with a smiling John, who was perfectly oily with satisfaction and pride because his pretty wife was enjoying herself in the dress-circle with a crowd of young mashers.

'Dat my wife,' observed he proudly to me, as he pointed up to where the fair one sat, dressed in the most expensive silks and overloaded with bangles and gold chains, 'and all de swells am friends of Maly's.'

It was nothing to John that Mary ignored the presence of her lord and master in the pit; enough that she was the most extravagantly-dressed and best-attended woman in the theatre. He had none of the nature of the 'dog in the manger' in him.

From Bright I drove to Harrietville on the post-cart, getting in the twilight rare glimpses of hill scenery with the sparkling river rushing along pure and fresh. Next day the laborious portion of the journey began—the mountain journey on horseback.

There was a maidservant at Allan's hotel who startled me very much. She was middle-aged, tall and gaunt, with hard features and a morose air of gloomy mystery which filled me with apprehension.

When she entered to lay my supper and arrange the fire, she would come over to my side with a teacup or plate in her hand (for she ushered the articles in separately), and in a sibilant, hoarse whisper begin to tell me something, but what it was I never could quite gather, as, before she had well begun, her smart mistress would bounce in after her crying, 'Look alive there, Jane!' Then she would put her finger warningly to her thin lips and utter the one sound 'Hush!' lay down the cup and disappear for the next article.

Whatever did the woman mean? Was I in a den of bandits who were only waiting for the hour of sleep to enter my bedroom by some trap-door and cut my throat? I asked her nervously to tell me several times as she hovered near, but the communications were always cut short. I could only gather such disjointed sentences as 'To-night when all is quiet'—'I know your room'—'Look out.'

I did not feel happy, but I had a task to perform before I could get to bed, a preparation against the morrow, so having finished my tea, I stole out quietly to a little tailor's shop in the silent township and laid in a stock of needles and thread, also some sheets of cotton wadding. After

Deniliquin experiences in the saddle, I resolved to prepare myself against all emergencies, so by the light of my candle I did a bit of artful tailoring in the seclusion of my bedroom, after carefully locking my door; then with a sigh of relief I covered myself up and fell asleep. No fell tragedy happened that night at the hotel, so next morning after a hearty breakfast and a walk round Harrierville, with its creek of delicious ice-cold water, valleys and extensive scenery, I mounted the old black horse assigned to me, and with my guide began the ascent to Feathertop, and the snowy Alps.

Mr. Gallacher was the name of my guide, the mountain mail man. He had a weekly round of the hills, winter and summer, of about 160 miles, all up and down tremendous mountains. In summer when it was clear it was comparatively easy, for he could then ride over his ground, but in the winter, when the snow was heavy and drifting, he had to walk over Feathertop and Razor Back, sleeping out in the cold where best he could, and walking along fearful ridges of frozen snow with nothing underneath for 2,000 feet or more.

He told me as we went up that he once conveyed a father and two sons over Razor Back when it was covered with snow. He had great difficulty in keeping the young fellows to the solid narrow track, for seeing a broad level surface of hard snow they would not believe him when he told them that it was only a thin outstanding ice-shelf over a fearful abyss. But when they got over the dangerous ledge, and he gained a point of the journey where they could see it, then as the father looked at the three or four thousand feet of clear drop, and that awful bending narrow shelf of ice and snow protruding over it, along which they had passed in their unconsciousness, he fell back in a dead faint. Razor Back is 6,300 feet high, with only a very narrow edge along the top of the vast precipices. Gallacher does his winter journey in snowshoes.

About a mile from Harrierville a little woman met us, on horseback, with her riding-habit wet through to the waist. She had just come over Feathertop and reported that the snow in some places was up to her horse's neck, but

that it was rapidly melting. She was a farmer's wife and rode this dangerous journey alone, going down to Bright for some groceries she was short of at home. This is the land of unconscious heroes and heroines;—the roadway had been impassable for some weeks before this, but she could no longer wait for the provision cart or want her cup of tea, so she had coolly braved the dangers of the way.

Feathertop is 6,303 feet high, Bogong 6,508, Buffalo 5,645, Hotham 6,100, Baldy 4,625.

It is a stiff climb up the track for those 3,000 feet, from the mountain town of Harrietville to the hospice, with deep gutters and great yawning valleys spreading out, and from where the mountain sides slope up like house-roofs, forests covered at the bottom and gradually thinning up to dead wood and finally rocks, grass, and patches of snow. Feathertop was almost clear, but on Razor Back and Baldy the snow still lay in square patches and ribbon-like stripes of glistening white.

William Bonstead, the landlord of the hospice, received us with a roaring wood fire, for we were cold, and it is always sharp at the hospice; then after a rest we were once more in the saddle and on our descent into the valley of the Dargo, down, down without a pause, along narrow ledges with fearful precipices below us. We passed in the space of two or three hours, from the height of winter weather to torrid summer.

My horse was as surefooted as a goat, yet I shivered sometimes as he stumbled over the loose stones when descending these narrow ledges and I heard the stones rattle over the edge and strike with a faint far-off sound against the rocks below. At one part my waterproof dropped from my saddle and fluttered down for hundreds of feet without interruption, until it looked like an amber-coloured butterfly against the blue haze of the tree tops upon which it had finally rested.

The Dargo was a pretty, swiftly-rushing stream just then, but sometimes, as I saw by the high-water mark on its banks, it becomes a great and roaring flood, bearing along everything in its impetuous force.

That night we slept in an old deserted woodman's hut

at a place in the valley called Mayford. Gallacher was an expert bushman, therefore he soon had a blazing fire and a boiling billy of tea, while I lay back helpless. Now that I was off my horse, it was ten thousand times worse than walking, still not nearly so bad as it might have been, thanks to that midnight ceremony which had taken place with the cotton wadding at Harrierville.

Next morning I said farewell to Gallacher the mailman. He directed me on my way to Omeo from where I could get to the highest of the Alps, Mount Kosciusko on the New South Wales side, and which is 12,000 feet high.

It was a plain track that my guide pointed out, and plain directions which he gave me before he rode away on his lonely round, yet I lost my road utterly within an hour after leaving him, and but for Bob, my sagacious old horse, my whitened skeleton might have been riding still amongst these grand mountain passes while my horse grazed on peacefully. But he had been on the journey before and knew his way, so that after I grew tired out with racking my brains and exercising my own judgment, I flung the reins on his neck and let him go as he liked, which was the very best thing that I could have done, for he brought me to Omeo as the night fell.

All about the region of Kosciusko is wildly romantic in the extreme, the mountain itself with its snow-covered sharp peaks—for it is seldom bare, the Cobboras, Gibbos and other points rising high above the forests—precipices, and gorges through which rapid rivers and streams rush. It is all a wild climb over boulders, piled-up rocks, snow-covered peaks, tangled valleys, up and down a country of wild and savage grandeur, right on through deep fissures with great precipices rising up, till I come to that mighty chasm called the Murray Gates.

Here daylight is nearly always shut out from the spectator by those 3,000 feet of perpendicular cliffs, while the Murray runs quietly along over the pebbles and past the boulders at their feet, a moderately sized stream, but soon to be fed by the many hill tributaries until it swells into a mighty river.

A wonderfully impressive scene of solitude and greatness

—as I stand outside my temporary camp, looking up to that little strip of evening sky overhead, the full moon smiles over the fissure and repeats its silver lustre in the ripples of the stream at my feet ; I am not quite alone, since that familiar moon looks down upon me in this vast abyss, yet,



but for that silver circle, how unutterably and morbidly lonely it would have been !

From Omeo to Bruthen I go by stage coach, a drive to be remembered long afterwards, for our driver is courageous and in a hurry to get over the ground, his horses are fresh and full of mettle, but the road is of the roughest

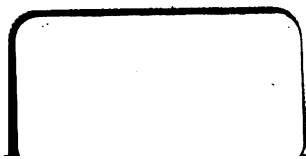
description. After many stops and topplings over, at which times we have to get out and help the wheels out of the deep ruts; after our insides are nearly jolted out, and after repeated walks up the hills, we arrive at our journey's end wearied and grateful for any small mercies which may be bestowed upon us.

Along by the High Ranges, Mount Elizabeth, and Fainting Range with its cuttings, cliffs, and gorges, past bullock drays slowly and painfully toiling along, we jump and jostle, now two or three feet into the air, now banging against one another, or what is worse after my long ride, landing full upon the hard seat again before we can take any precaution to break the fall. On we go without a pause down the Tambo Valley and over Monkey Creek, bringing behind us volumes of choking dust.

Parrots are plentiful here, also the beautiful lyre birds; I hear the Bell bird once again and at one part we crush over the gliding body of a large black snake; then past Lucknow we rush, covering it up with that dense dust-cloud; past lonely patches of bush, trailing honeysuckle, and reedy marshes where stupid green frogs sit croaking and waiting to be devoured by the watchful snakes, past Bruthen, and so once more into Bairnsdale. My travels for the present are over, and now I may have a bit of a rest.

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